

Random Act

VA. Tech gunman kills officer, later found dead

Police officers block a road on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Va., after a gunman killed a police officer Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011. The school said a police officer pulled someone over for a traffic stop and was shot and killed.

(AP Photo/The Roanoke Times, Matt Gentry)

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VA. Tech gunman kills officer, later found dead

Continued from front

ERIC TUCKER
ZINIE CHEN SAMPSON

Associated Press
BLACKSBURG, Virginia

(AP) — A gunman killed a police officer in a Virginia Tech parking lot and was found dead nearby Thursday in an attack that sent fear through the campus nearly five years after it was the scene of the deadliest shooting rampage in modern U.S. history.

The school locked down for hours and warned students and faculty members via email and text message to stay indoors. The shootings came as university officials were in Washington appealing a fine that U.S. officials gave them over the school's response to the 2007 rampage.

"Today, tragedy again struck Virginia Tech," said university president Charles Steger. "Our hearts are broken again."

The police officer was killed after pulling a driver over in a traffic stop. The gunman, who was not involved in the traffic stop, walked into

the parking lot and shot the officer, Sgt. Robert Carpentieri said. Police wouldn't talk about a motive.

A law enforcement official who spoke on the condition of anonymity confirmed the gunman was dead, but wouldn't say how.

It appeared the gunman died in another school parking lot, where officials said a man was found dead with a gun nearby. While police at a news conference wouldn't confirm the second body was the gunman, Carpentieri said "you can kind of read between the lines."

The campus swarmed with heavily armed police during the lockdown and manhunt. Students hid in buildings, a day before final exams were to begin Friday.

"A lot of people, especially toward the beginning were scared," said Jared Brumfield, a 19-year-old freshman.

"It's crazy that someone would go and do something like that with all the stuff that happened in 2007," said Corey Smith, a



Some students and staff leave as police secure the perimeter of the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Va. after a gunman walked into a parking lot and killed a Virginia Tech police officer who was conducting a traffic stop, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011.

(AP Photo/The Roanoke Times, Sam Dean)

19-year-old sophomore. Campus was quieter than usual because classes ended Wednesday. The school said exams that were to start Friday would be postponed. The shooting came as Virginia Tech was appealing a \$55,000 fine by the U.S. Education Department in connection with the university's response to the 2007 shootings. The department said the

school violated the law by waiting more than two hours after two students were shot to death in their dorm before sending an email warning. By then, student gunman Seung-Hui Cho was chaining shut the doors to a classroom building where he killed 30 more people and then himself. The department said the email was too vague because it mentioned only

a "shooting incident," not the deaths.

An administrative judge ended the hearing by asking each side to submit a brief by the end of January. It is unclear when he will rule.

Since the massacre, the school has overhauled its alert system and now sends text messages, emails, tweets and posts messages on its website.

Other colleges and universities have put in place similar systems.

On Thursday, during about a one-hour period, the university issued four separate alerts.

Derek O'Dell, a third-year student who was wounded in the 2007 shootings, was shaken. He was monitoring the situation from his home a couple of miles from campus.

"At first I was just hoping it was a false alarm," he said. "Then there were reports of two people dead, and the second person shot was in the parking lot where I usually park to go to school, so it was kind of surreal." □

Letter bomb sent to German bank chief

NICHOLAS KULISH

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BERLIN — German authorities said Thursday that a suspicious envelope intercepted by Deutsche Bank employees was a letter bomb apparently sent by an Italian anarchist organization to the bank's chief executive, Josef Ackermann, one of the most powerful and controversial figures in European banking.

In a joint statement the state police in Hessen and the Frankfurt prosecutor's office said "initial investigations show that this was a functional letter bomb." The letter was addressed to Ackermann.

Though a native Swiss, Ackermann is the most prominent banker in Germany, his name is synonymous with an industry whose reputation has plummeted since the financial crisis.

A spokesman for the state police, Siegfried Wilhelm, said a letter had been found, and an Italian group,

the Informal Anarchist Federation, which has a history of sending letter bombs, claimed responsibility. Unofficial suspicion had earlier fallen on the Frankfurt offshoot of the Occupy Wall Street movement, which condemned the attempted letter bombing.

Threats on the lives of Deutsche Bank executives are not taken lightly here after the 1989 assassination of Alfred Herrhausen, the bank's chief at the time, in a bomb attack. Suspicions fell on the Red Army Faction terrorist group.

According to the statement by police and prosecutors, employees in the Deutsche Bank mailroom discovered the envelope Wednesday and, suspicious of its contents, had it X-rayed before contacting police around midday. Klaus Thoma, a spokesman for the bank, said bank employees had alerted police to a suspicious package but said he would not comment further

on the matter.

Frankfurt police and specialists from the state police defused the letter bomb. Details on the construction of the bomb were not available for "investigative tactical reasons," the statement said.

Ackermann is also chairman of the Institute of International Finance, an industry group that has lobbied against regulations that would require higher capital requirements to help prevent future crises. He was also involved in negotiations over write-downs of Greek debt, sometimes called haircuts, for private bond owners.

Chancellor Angela Merkel came under scrutiny in 2009 for hosting a dinner party the year before with Ackermann as a guest. The German media described the event as a birthday party in Ackermann's honor, raising questions about the cozy ties between finance and government. □

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NATO fuel tankers set ablaze in Pakistan

ABDUL SATTAR
Associated Press

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP) — Assailants torched more than 20 tankers in Pakistan carrying fuel for U.S. and NATO troops in neighboring Afghanistan on Thursday, in the first reported attack since Islamabad closed the border to protest coalition airstrikes that killed 24 Pakistani troops last month. Several hundred trucks have been stranded at poorly guarded terminals around the country as they wait for Pakistan to reopen its two border crossings into Afghanistan. Around 40 percent of the non-lethal supplies for U.S.-led troops in landlocked Afghanistan travel across Pakistani soil. Islamabad closed both frontier crossings into Afghanistan on Nov. 26, hours after airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition killed 24 Pakistani troops on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. U.S.

and NATO officials have said the incident was a mistake, and have pledged to investigate.

Police officer Hamid Shakil says unknown men fired rockets at a terminal for the tankers close to the southwestern city of Quetta. He said at least 23 tankers were set ablaze. There were no immediate reports of casualties. Last year, Islamabad temporarily closed one of its Afghan crossings to NATO supplies after U.S. helicopters accidentally killed two Pakistani soldiers. Suspected militants or criminals took advantage of the impasse to launch many attacks against stranded or rerouted trucks carrying NATO supplies.

The deadly airstrikes at the border sent already tense relations between Pakistan and the United States to new lows, threatening Islamabad's cooperation in helping negotiate an end

to the Afghan war.

It came amid political tensions in Islamabad following the resignation of Pakistan's ambassador to the United States following an outcry from the country's powerful military establishment, which is in charge of Afghan and U.S. policy. Envoy Husain Haqqani stepped down because of allegations he wrote a memo to Washington asking for its help to stop a supposed military coup.

President Asif Ali Zardari has been under pressure because of the scandal, and on Tuesday flew to Dubai for medical treatment related to a heart condition. □



Pakistani fire fighters trying to extinguish burning oil tankers allegedly torched by militants at a terminal on the outskirts of Quetta, Pakistan on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011. Assailants torched more than 20 tankers in Pakistan carrying fuel for U.S. and NATO troops in neighboring Afghanistan on Thursday, in the first reported attack since Islamabad closed the border to protest coalition airstrikes that killed 24 Pakistani troops last month.

(AP Photo/Arshad Butt)

Obama celebrates Hanukkah at the White House



President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama share a laugh as they attend a Hanukkah reception with Vice President Joe Biden and Dr. Jill Biden, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, in the Grand Foyer of the White House in Washington.

(AP Photo/Haraz N. Ghanbari)

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is marking Hanukkah as a story of "faith over doubt."

Obama, first lady Michelle Obama and Vice President Joe Biden convened a Hanukkah celebration at the White House Thursday in an early observance of the Jewish festival of lights.

Obama said the Hanukkah story was about "right over might, faith over doubt." In the Hanukkah story a small band of Jews rededicating a Jerusalem temple found that a one-day supply of oil kindled a flame instead for eight.

The president noted "our unshakable support and commitment to the security of the nation of Israel."

Hanukkah begins at sunset Dec. 20. Obama joked that everyone needs to be "careful that your kids don't start thinking Hanukkah lasts 20 nights instead of eight. That would cause some problems." □



In this photo provided by the Association of Surfing Professionals, Jack Freestone, of Australia, competes in the Billabong Pipeline Masters in Memory of Andy Irons, on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, in Hawaii.

(AP Photo/Association of Surfing Professionals, Kirstin Scholtz)



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Sandusky's wife defends husband in sex abuse case



Former Penn State football coach Jerry Sandusky gets out of a car in front of his State College, Pa., home on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011. The former Penn State assistant football coach was released from jail Thursday after spending a night behind bars following a new round of child sex abuse charges filed against him. Sandusky secured his release using \$200,000 in real estate holdings and a \$50,000 certified check provided by his wife, Dorothy, according to online court records.

(AP Photo/Centre Daily Times, Nabil K. Mark)

**GENARO C. ARMAS
MARC LEVY**

Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pennsylvania (AP) — The wife of ex-Penn State assistant coach Jerry Sandusky said Thursday her husband is innocent of the child sex abuse allegations made against him and that his accusers are making up their stories, including one suggesting she was home while Sandusky attacked a boy who screamed for help.

Dottie Sandusky's comments defending her husband were the first she has made since Sandusky was arrested last month and accused of molesting boys he met through a charity he founded for troubled youth. He faces more than 50 charges and has maintained his innocence.

She released the statement through her husband's lawyer a day after a grand jury report detailed claims of two new accusers, among them the testimony of one who said he cried out for her help while Sandusky assaulted him in a basement bedroom. "I am so sad anyone would make such a terrible accusation which is absolutely untrue," she said. "We don't know why these young men have made these false

accusations, but we want everyone to know they are untrue." Dottie Sandusky, who has raised six adopted children, said she has been "shocked and dismayed" by the claims.

"I have been devastated by these accusations," she said. "Our children, our extended family and friends know how much Jerry and I love kids and have always tried to help and care for them. We would never do anything to hurt them."

Earlier Thursday, Jerry Sandusky was released after a night in jail when he posted bail stemming from the latest child sex abuse charges filed against him. Sandusky secured his release using \$200,000 in real estate holdings and a \$50,000 certified check provided by his wife, according to online court records. A judge has ordered him subject to electronic monitoring.

Sandusky faces criminal accusations from 10 young men who claim he molested them when they were boys in his home, on Penn State property and elsewhere. The scandal has provoked strong criticism that Penn State officials didn't do enough to stop the alleged assaults and prompted the ouster of Hall of Fame football

coach Joe Paterno and the school's longtime president, Graham Spanier.

Sandusky, 67, has said repeatedly that he is innocent and has vowed to fight the case. In interviews with NBC and The New York Times, he said he showered and horsed around with boys but never sexually abused them. Until her statement, Dottie Sandusky, 68, had kept largely out of sight since the charges were filed. She wasn't seen or heard during his two interviews, had given no interviews herself and had not accompanied Sandusky to court the two times he was brought in for arraignments.

The grand jury report that accompanied the 12 new charges Wednesday said one alleged victim testified Jerry Sandusky kept him in a basement bedroom during overnight visits to the home, fed him there, forced him to perform oral sex and attempted on at least 16 occasions to anally penetrate him, sometimes successfully. "The victim testified that on at least one occasion he screamed for help, knowing that Sandusky's wife was upstairs, but no one ever came to help him," the grand jury report said. □

Romney attacks Gingrich in US presidential race



Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, left, walks with former Vice President Dan Quayle before the start of a campaign event, Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2011, in Paradise Valley, Ariz. where Quayle endorsed Romney

(AP Photo/Ross D. Franklin)

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney opened a broad and newly abrasive assault on surging rival Newt Gingrich on Thursday, dispatching supporters and staff to cast the former House of Representatives leader as unworthy of the nomination and unfit to be U.S. president.

Romney is aiming to undermine Gingrich on personal and professional fronts ahead of the 2012 campaign's opening contest Jan. 3 in Iowa — a reversal by the one-time front-runner who had previously all but ignored his Republican opponents.

The criticism from Romney and his allies, after months of focusing solely on President Barack Obama, comes as the race has developed into a two-person contest. Gingrich's quick rise in national and early-state polls threatens Romney's claim as the likeliest Republican to be chosen to challenge Obama next fall.

The two will clash during a nationally televised debate Saturday night.

Gingrich has amassed a sizable lead with a month remaining until Iowa casts the first ballots in a nationwide nominating process to choose a Republican candidate.

"He's not a reliable and trusted conservative leader because he's not a reli-

able or trustworthy leader," former Senator Jim Talent, a Romney supporter, said of Gingrich, offering a preview of the attacks Romney's team promised would continue in the next few weeks.

Romney allies also were giving him a boost, announcing a \$3.1 million TV ad campaign in Iowa that is expected to include hard-hitting commercials against Gingrich. One ad boasts of Romney's "steadiness and constancy" while inviting comparisons with Gingrich's multiple marriages and late conversion to Catholicism.

Campaigning in South Carolina, Gingrich brushed off the verbal assault.

"We're focused on remaining positive," he said.

Gingrich's reluctance to engage may be out of necessity. He dramatically lags Romney in organizational firepower as he tries to rebuild his campaign after an early summer implosion that left it deep in debt.

Gingrich's rise, although he still trails Romney in New Hampshire — the second state to choose a candidate — reflects conservative Republicans' growing belief that his bare-knuckles political style has a better chance of defeating Obama. The president's job approval rating has plummeted over his handling of the U.S. economy. □

Senate blocks Obama's choice for consumer panel

JOHN H. CUSHMAN Jr.

© 2011 New York Times

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Thursday blocked President Barack Obama's nominee to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, as filibustering Republicans who oppose the very powers of the new agency successfully challenged one of the administration's main responses to the financial crisis.

The nomination of Richard Cordray was rejected after Democrats failed to achieve the 60 votes they needed to move his nomination forward.

The vote was 55 yes, 45 no. Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader, said his party had made clear for months that it would not approve a leader for the watchdog consumer agency until the law that established it was amended.

Until three changes are made, he said, "We won't



President Barack Obama speaks at the White House in Washington, Dec. 8, 2011. On Thursday, the Senate blocked Obama's choice to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, a legislative response to the predatory mortgage lending practices that many critics think were partly responsible for the financial crisis.

(Doug Mills/The New York Times)

from consideration for the post. She is a Harvard law professor who had been the driving force behind in July to lead it. In his confirmation hearings in September, he told a Senate committee that he

populist overtones, singled out Thursday's Senate vote for attention and said he would veto any legislation undoing consumer protections in the world of finance. "Does anyone here think the problem that led to our financial crisis was too much oversight of mortgage lenders or debt collectors? Of course not," he said.

"Financial institutions have plenty of lobbyists looking out for their interests," he said.

"Consumers deserve to have someone whose job it is to look out for them. I intend to make sure they do, and I will veto any effort to delay, defund or dismantle the new rules we put in place." □

Man wanted in Portugal appeals extradition in US

SAMANTHA HENRY

Associated Press

NEWARK, New Jersey (AP)

— An attorney for a man wanted in Portugal to serve time there for his conviction in a murder-for-hire plot told a judge Thursday that there isn't enough evidence to warrant his extradition.

Manuel Albert Soares has been incarcerated in New Jersey since April, when he was pulled over on the New Jersey Turnpike and police discovered an international warrant for his arrest.

A Portuguese criminal court acquitted Soares in 2007 of the attempted murder of ex-wife Maria Teresa Franqueira Mourao, but prosecutors appealed. Portugal's Supreme Court revoked the acquittal, sentencing Soares to four years and six months in prison. U.S. Magistrate Judge Madeline Cox Arleo ruled in May that Soares should be extradited, arguing it wasn't the

job of the U.S. courts to retry the case. She dismissed a request from his attorney that she consider transcripts from his Portuguese trial in her decision. Soares appealed Cox-Arleo's ruling and asked for another hearing. On Thursday, his attorney, Michael Orozco, tried to make the same argument before a different judge in Newark federal court. Orozco told U.S. District Judge Jose Linares that the Portuguese court decision hadn't been based on enough evidence to meet the burden of proof required to extradite someone from the U.S. "There was no DNA evidence, no bank records, no fingerprints," Orozco said of Soares' conviction in Portugal. "There is, in essence, nothing other than a suspicion, that, because he went through a divorce, and that divorce wasn't nice, and because he was the ex-husband, that no

one else could be the suspect." Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Romankow countered that Soares' guilt had been judged by the highest court in Portugal and that it wasn't the role of the U.S. courts to retry the case or even consider evidence from the trial in deciding whether he met the criteria for extradition. "There is no mechanism for (Soares) to ask for a re-evaluation of the evidence," Romankow said. In an earlier letter to Linares, Soares said he had never attempted to hide from U.S. or Portuguese authorities and had been living openly in New Jersey, even renewing his state driver's license in the weeks before he was detained. Orozco said Soares knew about the Supreme Court order in Portugal and had written to U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to try to appeal his case. □

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Death row inmate gets new trial due to tweet

JEANNIE NUSS

Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (AP)

— A state Supreme Court on Thursday tossed out a death row inmate's murder conviction and said he deserves a new trial because one juror slept and another tweeted during court proceedings.

Erickson Dimas-Martinez's attorneys had appealed his 2010 murder conviction in Arkansas because a juror sent tweets despite the judge's instruction not to post on the Internet or communicate with anyone about the case. The lawyers also complained that another juror slept.

In one tweet, juror Randy Franco wrote: "Choices to be made. Hearts to be broken...We each define the great line." Less than an hour before the jury announced its verdict, he tweeted: "It's over."

Other tweets by Franco made passing references to the trial, with posts such as, "The coffee sucks here" and "Court. Day 5. here we go again."

The court said Franco, known as Juror 2 in court documents, violated general instructions to not discuss the case. Before opening arguments, the judge said: "Just remember, never discuss this case over your cell phone ... and don't Twitter anybody about this case." Franco didn't immediately return a message left Thursday, but he has defended his tweets in the past.

"None of my texts indicated anything about the trial," he told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette last year. "I hadn't made up my mind." That explanation seemed to

satisfy a lower court judge, but it didn't sit well with the state's highest court.

"Because of the very nature of Twitter as an ... on-line social media site, Juror 2's tweets about the trial were very much public discussions. Even if such dis-

Facebook, Twitter, or other social media sites, but they can also access news sites that might have information about a case," Corbin wrote.

He also asked a panel to consider whether to limit jurors' access to cell phones



Erickson Dimas-Martinez who was convicted in 2010 in the slaying of Derrick Jefferson. The Arkansas Supreme Court on Thursday, Dec. 7, 2011, tossed out the death row inmate's murder conviction, finding misconduct among jurors who slept and tweeted during the proceedings.

(Arkansas Department of Correction)

cussions were one-sided, it is in no way appropriate for a juror to state musings, thoughts, or other information about a case in such a public fashion," Associate Justice Donald Corbin wrote.

The justices also used the case to point out that a wide array of juror misconduct can come into play when jurors have unrestricted access to their cell phones during a trial.

"Most mobile phones now allow instant access to a myriad of information. Not only can jurors access

during trials.

Janice Vaughn, who argued Dimas-Martinez's case in front of the state Supreme Court last month, said the case will likely bring about new rules governing jurors' cell phone usage.

"It's not about your right to tweet or be on Facebook," said Felecia Epps, who teaches criminal law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. "It's about protecting the right of the person who may end up behind bars or end up losing a significant amount of money in a civil case." □

Income gap widens within the black community

JESSE WASHINGTON

AP National Writer

What happens within the black community when the gap widens between the poor and the affluent? That's one question raised by new census data showing well-off African-Americans leaving cities for the suburbs and the South while the ranks of the black poor grow larger.

Over the past decade, the share of black households ranking among the poorest poor — those earning less than \$15,000 — climbed from 20 percent to 26 percent, according to census figures released Thursday. Other racial and ethnic groups posted smaller increases. During the same period, the percentage of African-Americans making \$200,000 or more a year was unchanged at 1.1 percent, even after the Great Recession.

Meanwhile, in a reversal of the Great Migration that once pushed blacks to flee Southern racism for economic opportunity in northern cities, many affluent blacks are returning to the South. Incomes and black populations have grown in the last decade in cities such as Atlanta, Dallas and Miami.

David Lamothe, associate general counsel for a major bank in Charlotte, grew up in New York City with parents who immigrated from Haitian poverty and climbed into the middle class. Now he is associate general counsel for a major bank in Charlotte, where he lives with his pediatrician wife and their three children, ages 8 to 14.

He is acutely aware of differences in the dynamic of today's black community.

"Growing up, when we went to a party, it was all black kids, and we had no idea how much money their parents made.

Everybody went to the same party. My best friend lived in the projects. My kids don't have that," said Lamothe. "There's not much opportunity for them to see those kids (from low-income families). There's more stratification."

Despite some gains for middle-class blacks, African-Americans on average last year still had rising poverty and worsening economic situations compared with whites. The mostly suburban counties where blacks had growing and higher-than-average income make up about 19 percent of the black population.

That's compared with 45 percent of blacks who lived in urban counties and small towns where black incomes fell relative to whites.

Blacks were more likely than other groups to live in neighborhoods with poverty rates of 40 percent or more. Roughly one in nine of them did.

Lamothe's response is to make sure his children recognize their humble roots.

"I stress to them, just because somebody pushes a broom doesn't make you any better than them. You have family members on both sides who do that kind of job. You also have family who have been very fortunate professionally, but that doesn't make us better than anybody else."

Still, a gap remains between black families who live in different neighborhoods, attend different schools and live different lives. □

Corzine distances himself from firm's downfall

DANIEL MARCY GORDON
AP Business Writers
WASHINGTON (AP) — Summoned by Congress, Jon Corzine embraced a bold strategy Thursday to dis-

WAGNER tance himself from MF Global's fall and \$1.2 billion in missing clients' money: Answer each question. Be courteous. And don't huddle with your lawyer before replying.

Doctors unable to reattach guillotine severed arm



A homemade guillotine that a man used to cut off his own arm is seen in Bellingham, Wash. Bellingham police disclosed Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2011, in response to a records request that doctors were unable to reattach the right arm of the man. At the time, officials did not say if attempts to reattach the arm were successful. Police say the 32-year-old man was in stable condition after hospital treatment and was held for a mental evaluation.

(AP Photo/Bellingham Police Dept., File)

BELLINGHAM, Washington (AP) — Bellingham police say doctors were unable to reattach the right arm of a man who severed his limb with a homemade guillotine in October at a transient camp. At the time, officials did not say if attempts to reattach the arm were successful. Police disclosed the information Wednesday in response to a records request. Police say the 32-year-old man was in stable condition after hospital treatment and was held for a mental evaluation. Officers say he built a 16-foot (5-meter)-tall guillotine with scrap lumber and sharpened a 60-pound piece of metal. He apparently applied a tourniquet before dropping the blade.

The man went to a medical clinic for help but wouldn't say where his arm was because "it was better to lose that part than one's soul." Police found the arm. □



Former New Jersey Gov. and Sen. Jon Corzine is sworn in on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, prior to testifying before the House Agriculture Committee hearing regarding the collapse of MF Global.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

He said very little. Nevertheless, it was a risky strategy, even for a risk-taking financial executive.

Anything Corzine might say could be used against him in a courtroom, should he ever be charged in the MF Global case.

Yet the former CEO of the securities firm never declined to answer questions by invoking his Fifth Amendment constitutional right against self-incrimination.

The one-time senator and New Jersey governor was subpoenaed by his former colleagues to explain how MF Global collapsed just over a month ago in the eighth-largest bankruptcy in U.S. history. □

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Colombian rebels insist on trading hostages



Former rebel hostage Consuelo Perdomo, center, embraces Oliva Olarte, mother of slain rebel hostage Jorge Trujillo, after a funeral Mass for four hostages executed after being held captive for 12 to 13 years by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, in Bogota, Colombia. The new leader of FARC repeated on Thursday a proposal for the government to free jailed guerrillas in exchange for rebel-held hostages.

(AP Photo/Fernando Vergara)

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — The new leader of Colom-

bia's largest rebel group repeated on Thursday a proposal for the government to free jailed guerrillas in exchange for rebel-held hostages. A statement from Timoleon Jimenez, commander of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, said that "any humanitarian accord could open the doors to a dialogue for peace." The statement was posted on a rebel website a day after Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos rejected such an exchange and called on the rebels to free all their hostages unilaterally as a step toward possible dialogue.

"Peace is seen as Colombians' most intense ... yearning, while from Santos' mouth there are only threats of deepening the war," Jimenez said in the statement.

A dozen hostages, including eight police officers and four soldiers, have been held by the FARC for more than a decade. Hundreds of rebels are in Colombian prisons. □

Caribbean news briefs

Church confirms pope to visit island in spring

HAVANA (AP) — Pope Benedict XVI will visit Communist-run Cuba this spring, a senior Roman Catholic Church official said Thursday, the first trip by a pontiff since John Paul II's historic tour in 1998. The exact date of the trip, which coincides with the 400th anniversary of Cuba's patron saint, will be announced in Rome early next week, according to Monsignor Jose Felix Perez, executive secretary of the Cuban Bishops Conference. Cuba's church has played an increasingly important role in Cuba in recent years, helping negotiate the release of political prisoners in 2009 and 2010, and even consulting with President Raul Castro and his advisers on free-market changes he is pushing to save the island's economy from ruin. □

Phone book to let new entrepreneurs run ads

HAVANA (AP) — The yellow pages are poised for a comeback — in Cuba, at least. The back section of the phone book will soon provide much-needed advertising space to private entrepreneurs opening up shop under wide-ranging economic reforms being pushed by President Raul Castro. State telephone monopoly Etecsa will charge \$10 for a listing in a basic registry that includes a firm's name, address and up to two phone numbers, the Communist Party newspaper Granma said Thursday. That's not cheap in Cuba, a country where government salaries average \$20 a month. It's more than what some independent workers like gardeners pay for their monthly license fees, and Granma said the fee is to be paid in Cuba's more valuable convertible pesos, known as CUC. □

Marley relative in dispute over reggae legend's name

MIAMI (AP) — The half-brother of reggae legend Bob Marley said Thursday he will fight a lawsuit that seeks to stop him from using Marley's name and image without official authorization to promote an annual Miami music festival and other ventures. Richard Booker, whose mother Cedella Booker was also Marley's, said an internal family dispute should not have escalated into a legal battle. The lawsuit was filed last week on behalf of a Bahamian company that represents Marley's widow, Rita, and nine of the late superstar's children. The lawsuit, filed in Miami federal court, asks a judge to stop Booker from using Marley's name, image, lyrics and other intellectual property unless he reaches a licensing agreement to do so with the family company, Fifty-Six Hope Road Music Ltd. □

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Putin accuses Clinton of instigating protests

DAVID M. HERSZENHORN
STEVEN LEE MYERS

© 2011 New York Times

MOSCOW — Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on Thursday accused Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton of instigating protests over the results of Russia's parliamentary elections by baselessly criticizing the vote as "dishonest and unfair" and he warned that Russia needed to protect against "interference" by foreign governments in its internal affairs.

"I looked at the first reaction of our U.S. partners," Putin said in remarks to political allies. "The first thing that the secretary of state did was say that they were not honest and not fair, but she had not even yet received the material from the observers."

"She set the tone for some actors in our country and gave them a signal," Putin continued. "They heard the



Supporters of the United Russia Party dance to celebrate their party's victory in the parliamentary elections during a rally in downtown Moscow, Russia. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on Thursday accused Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton of instigating protests over the results of Russia's parliamentary elections by baselessly criticizing the vote as "dishonest and unfair" and he warned that Russia needed to protect against "interference" by foreign governments in its internal affairs.

(AP Photo/Misha Japaridze)

signal, and with the support of the U.S. State Department, began active work." Putin's remarks signaled a new worsening in relations with the United States,

threatening the Obama administration's efforts to "reset" the relationship with Russia. His critique was strikingly personal. By singling out Clinton, rath-

er than making a vague comment about the West, he effectively thrust the United States on the side of the protesters in the streets challenging the Kremlin's authority, and not entirely without reason.

Clinton has been outspoken in her criticism of the election, issuing several strongly worded statements, beginning Monday, after a preliminary report was released by observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

"The Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve the right to have their voices heard and their votes counted," Clinton said Monday in Bonn, Germany, while attending a conference on Afghanistan that included Russia's foreign minister, Sergey V.

Lavrov.

"That means they deserve a free, fair, transparent election and leaders who are accountable to them," she said.

The observers issued a scathing assessment in which they said their main concerns were deep structural problems, including the absence of separation between the government and United Russia, Putin's party.

Petros Efthymiou, a coordinator of the observer mission, cited "the interference of the state in all levels of political life, the lack of necessary conditions for a fair competition and no independence of the media." Clinton, asked about Putin's remarks, reiterated her concerns at a NATO meeting in Brussels on Thursday. □



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Explosion hits Syrian pipeline near restive city

ELIZABETH A. KENNEDY

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A major Syrian pipeline carrying oil to a refinery in restive Homs province was blown up Thursday in an attack the state-run news agency blamed on "saboteurs" as activists reported fresh violence from the government crackdown on a popular uprising.

The blast caused no casualties but sent a plume of black smoke into the sky. A government official said the blast caused a fire that burned for hours. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

"An armed terrorist group on Thursday committed an act of sabotage," the state-run SANA news agency said.

It was not clear who was behind the pipeline explosion at a time when violence in Syria is spiraling out of control, unearthing long-standing grievances and resentments. The opposition accuses the government of playing on fears of religious extremism and terrorism to rally support behind President Bashar Assad, who has portrayed himself as the only force that can stabilize the country. There were two similar blasts on Syrian pipelines in July and it is still not known who was behind them.

Nomair Makhlouf, the general director of the Syrian Oil Company, said the pipe-



A pro-Syrian regime protester waves a Syrian flag as he stands in front of portrait of Syrian President Bashar Assad, during a protest against sanctions, Damascus, Syria. Speaking to ABC's Barbara Walters in a rare interview that aired Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2011 President Bashar Assad maintained he did not give a command "to kill or be brutal."

(AP Photo/Muzaffar Salman, File)

line serves Syria's domestic requirements and carries 140,000 barrels a day.

Also Thursday, activists said security forces killed up to 14 people, most of them in Homs. The reports could not be independently confirmed as Syria has banned most foreign journalists from the country and prevented independent reporting.

Syria is trying to crush a 9-month-old popular uprising, but the conflict is turning more violent as once-peaceful protesters increasingly take up arms.

On Wednesday, Assad claimed in a rare interview he never ordered the brutal suppression of the uprising and insisted only a "crazy person" would kill his own people. Apparently trying to distance himself from violence that the U.N. says has

killed 4,000 people since March, Assad laughed off a question about whether he feels any guilt.

"I did my best to protect the people," he told ABC's Barbara Walters during an interview at the presidential palace in the Syrian capital, Damascus. "You feel sorry for the life that has been lost, but you don't feel guilty when you don't kill people."

"No government in the world (kills) its people unless it is led by a crazy person," Assad added.

Assad is under growing international pressure, in part from sanctions imposed by Turkey, the Arab League and the European Union aimed at squeezing the ailing economy and forcing the regime to halt the bloodshed. □



In this image made from surveillance video obtained by France's BFM television and publicly aired for the first time Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, two Sofitel hotel employees dance in a basement corridor of the hotel in New York on May 14, 2011. Hotel maid Nafissatou Diallo accused Dominique Strauss-Kahn of sexual assault in his room. The video is the basis of recent news reports suggesting Strauss-Kahn might have been the target of a political plot.

(AP Photo)

French TV shows Strauss-Kahn surveillance videos

JENNY BARCHFIELD

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Surveillance videos publicly aired for the first time Thursday show Dominique Strauss-Kahn leisurely checking out of a New York hotel where he was accused of committing sexual assault and show his accuser appearing to act out the alleged attack.

It was not immediately clear how France's BFM television acquired the minutes-long segments. The clips were the basis of recent news reports suggesting Strauss-Kahn might have been the target of a political plot but had not previously been publicly broadcast.

Strauss-Kahn was initially charged with attempted rape after a hotel maid, Nafissatou Diallo, alleged he attacked her and forced her to perform oral sex. New York prosecutors dropped the charges after they said they lost confidence in Diallo, who has filed a civil case.

In the clips, Strauss-Kahn — the former head of the International Monetary Fund — exits an elevator, pays his bill and gets in a cab. BFM said those images were filmed about 20 minutes after the alleged May 14 assault. Strauss-Kahn, wearing a dark coat and wheeling a suitcase, does not appear hurried or nervous.

A separate segment BFM said was filmed about 40 minutes after the alleged attack shows Diallo slumped against a wall in a corridor reserved for hotel staff. The images are heavily pixelated, and it's impossible to make out the expression on her face. □

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Iran shows video of purported US drone

KIMBERLY DOZIER
LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP)

— Tehran's capture of a largely intact, top secret U.S. drone, which it displayed on state television, not only lays bare America's surveillance program over Iran, but it also puts sensitive, advanced technology in hostile hands.

A former U.S. official confirmed to The Associated Press that the beige-colored drone featured in the more than two-minute video aired Thursday was indeed an RQ-170 Sentinel that is used for surveillance of Tehran's nuclear facilities. The U.S. military said it lost control of a drone earlier this week.

Iranian officials quickly claimed their military forces downed the Sentinel with an electronic attack. U.S. officials flatly rejected on Thursday the claim that any cyber or other electronic related activity was responsible for the loss of the drone.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the drone mission is classified.

The video, which showed Iranian officials examining the drone, provided the first real evidence of the Sentinel's capture, but more importantly it revealed the aircraft to be nearly in one piece.

That fact alone confirmed experts' contention that the classified aircraft can be programmed to land safely if its communications link is lost.

Robotics expert, Peter Singer, who has written

about the use of drones in war, said the Sentinel is programmed to circle in the air or land if its communications link is lost. Until the video came out, U.S. officials and other experts were suggesting the drone may have crashed, leaving Iran with only scattered pieces. The episode, however, could be a serious setback for what has been an escalating surveillance program, aimed largely at Iran's nuclear facilities, that has gone on for years from a U.S. air base in Afghanistan and other bases

in the region. It gives the Iranians the opportunity to share or sell the drone to others, such as the Chinese and Russians, who might be able to exploit better any technological information gleaned from examining it. U.S. officials are worried that others may be able to reverse engineer the chemical composition of the drone's radar-deflecting paint or the aircraft's sophisticated optics technology that allows operators to make positive identifications of terror suspects from tens of thousands of feet. □



This photo released on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, claims to show US RQ-170 Sentinel drone which Tehran says its forces downed earlier this week, as the chief of the aerospace division of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, right, listens to an unidentified colonel, in an undisclosed location, Iran. Eds note: the associated press has no way of independently verifying the content, location or date of this image.

(AP Photo/Sepahnews)





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Perfume's timelessness appeals to de la Renta

SAMANTHA CRITCHELL,

AP Fashion Writer

NEW YORK (AP) —

Oscar de la Renta takes longer to create that small, fits-in-your-hand bottle of perfume than one of his elaborate embellished ballgowns. It's just the nature of the business.

The process is similar, starting with an inspiration that comes from the gut, quality materials and fine workmanship, but de la Renta says he'll continue tinkering with a perfume until he's fully satisfied. There would be no point in rushing when he has the luxury of time, he explains.

While de la Renta takes care to say that even with his clothing designs, he doesn't follow — or set, for that matter — the "trends," he still operates on the fashion calendar that dictates the grinding, grueling pace of five collections a year. (Add to that the children's line the company just announced it's launching.) There is always a hunger for "new" and a need to be relevant in the moment, he observes.

In the beauty business,



The Oscar de la Renta Spring 2012 collection is modeled during Fashion Week in New York. Oscar de la Renta takes longer to create that small, fits-in-your-hand bottle of perfume than one of his elaborate embellished ballgowns. It's just the nature of the business. His newest is Live in Love, a classic scent with notes of ginger, orchid, hyacinth, muguet and jasmine, set against a base of white woods and musk.

(AP Photo/Jason DeCrow, file)

however, there aren't the same demands, so even though the hypothetical canvas is so much smaller, the process has few restrictions other than to create something lovely and lasting. "Fragrance — I look at in a different way than fashion," de la Renta says. "It's so unbelievably intimate in a person's life. When you discover the right one, it's like getting married: You don't change on a whim."

His newest is Live in Love, a classic scent with notes of ginger, orchid, hyacinth,

muguet and jasmine, set against a base of white woods and musk.

The house bought back its fragrance licenses three years ago (the licenses were owned by another company at the time) to give the perfumes more of

a synergy with its fashion reputation as a top-tier label, explains Alex Bolen, company CEO (as well as de la Renta's son-in-law). Each of the seven scents currently in production has to be elegance and luxury in a bottle, Bolen says.

De la Renta jumps in at this point in a joint interview to note that, however beautiful the bottle may be, it won't sell a perfume. Neither will the packaging, name or ad campaign. The juice has to connect to the wearer on a much deeper level, he says, so much so that it becomes part of her identity.

"You shouldn't change your fragrance when you don't smell it anymore. That's the wrong way to think about it. You shouldn't be able to notice it. ... That's when a fragrance is a true success."

Still, he says, he likes the stories of how the newest name and campaign evolved.

For the name, de la Renta was in his workroom in the heat of the summer and noticed the tattoo on the arm of one of the employees: Live in Love. "It was so obvious, so extraordinary. It's what I wanted to say. No one had used it, which was surprising, but that's the secret of life — sometimes the answer is so obvious."

When it came time to introduce the fragrance to the public, he wanted to find the right spokesmodel. He laid out print ads of all the competition, stripped off the names, and took a hard look at whose image he could choose to stand out from the crowd. He saw only one that he wanted.

Back in the 1950s and '60s when de la Renta was starting out, the trend wasn't celebrities; every designer who was anyone used an illustration of the chicest, most glamorous woman. That's who he wanted again — and that's the raven-haired, pen-and-ink "model" who looks back at you underneath the tagline, "The new fragrance for women created by a man who adores them." □

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CHTA condemns UK decision on air passenger duty

CARIBBEAN - The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) strongly condemns the announcement by the British Government on December 6, 2011, that there will be no change to its Air Passenger Duty banding structure, following on the announcement last week that rates to the Caribbean will increase by 8% from April 2012, and that the UK will continue to penalise aspirational travellers travelling in premium economy, who will remain in the same category as First Class.

This decision demonstrates the UK's complete disregard for the future economic prosperity of the Caribbean and the role of tourism in development.

The decision taken by the UK Treasury is in total contrast to the stated policy of the UK's desire to improve its relations with the independent Caribbean and Britain's Overseas Territories in the Caribbean.

Given that the UK Chancellor himself drew attention to the discrimination of the APD band structure vis-à-vis the rates for the Caribbean and the USA in his 2011 Budget statement, it is incomprehensible that he has subsequently chosen to continue this economic discrimination against the Caribbean and its community in the United Kingdom.

In 2010, the UK Prime Minister David Cameron noted that "tourism is a fiercely competitive market" and that tourism is "fundamental to the rebuilding and balancing" of the UK economy. In 2011, FCO Minister Jeremy Browne noted that tourism is a "hugely important part of the economy of Barbados." In that same



speech he noted the significance of UK tourists to Barbados.

The UK's international development strategy for the Caribbean has as its number one priority supporting economic growth and increasing Caribbean exports.

The discrimination of the APD band structure is demonstrated by the fact that the APD tax on an economy class ticket from London to Barbados, a distance of 4,190 miles, is US\$130 compared to an APD tax of US\$104 for London to Honolulu, a distance of 7,220 miles.

For flying 72% further to Honolulu the APD charged is 20% less than it is on a flight from London to Bridgetown, even though Barbados is much closer.

The APD charged to Barbados on a per mile basis is 114.7% more expensive when compared to the per mile charge to Honolulu. In addition, visitor arrivals from the UK for 2007 to 2010 have decreased by 19.7% while

arrivals from all other destinations have increased by 2.2% for the same period.

The Caribbean is the most tourism dependent region in the world with seven of the ten countries in the world most dependent on tourism.

Tourism is an export and a key earner of foreign exchange for the Caribbean. Based on historical links with the UK, the Caribbean depends heavily on UK tourists and for several Caribbean countries visitors from the UK are their primary market. The UK decision comes at a time when Caribbean tourism revenues have fallen by US\$5 billion in the past three years.

The CHTA, working jointly with the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), has repeatedly made these points over the past two years, supported by empirical documentation to the UK Treasury on the negative economic impact of APD on the Caribbean, and has received a sympa-

thetic hearing when it has accompanied Caribbean Prime Ministers and Ministers of Tourism to London.

The joint CHTA and CTO submission included alternative recommendations in order to maintain revenue neutrality and at the same time address the discrimination of the APD band structure vis-à-vis the rates for the Caribbean and the USA as already acknowledged by the UK Chancellor.

The failure to amend the APD banding also demonstrates a complete disregard for the impact of APD on the Caribbean community living in the UK which maintains strong links with the Caribbean.

Data suggests that they have already been forced to decrease their visits by 20 percent since the four band system was introduced. Increased ticket cost is given as the reason for this.

The Caribbean community on the whole are UK voters and their concerns have been disregarded also. In

addition both British Airways and Virgin Atlantic have announced schedule reductions to two major Caribbean destinations effective April 2012.

The message today from the UK government to the Caribbean is clear.

All of the history, the encouragement to switch from bananas and sugar to focus on tourism as the economic engine of Caribbean growth, and the comments about the value of the Commonwealth seem not to matter to the UK Treasury.

The UK's response today shows that it does not value the two way tourism trade between the UK and the Caribbean which supports jobs and growth in both the Caribbean and the UK. Nor does it acknowledge the extra-territorial impact that this tax is having on Caribbean nations, whose economies and people are also suffering.

The CHTA would like to ask, how many flights need to be cut and how much damage has to be done before the UK recognises the punitive impact of this tax on our exports and the future economic development of the Caribbean?

The British Government has heard the arguments but it does not care enough to do the right thing by the Caribbean.

In order to minimise further economic downturn in regards to visitor arrivals from the UK, CHTA is calling on Caribbean Governments to urgently address this unacceptable discrimination against the Caribbean by the UK Government.

CHTA remains committed to provide its full support and resources to the Caribbean Governments and CTO in this regard. □

Sinterklaas visits Van Dorp



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In tough times, a boom in cremations as a way to save money

KEVIN SACK

© 2011 New York Times

As Toni Kelly battled lymphoma, first with a bone marrow transplant and then with brutal rounds of chemotherapy, she wor-

of the factors driving that change.

The percentage of bodies that are cremated has risen steadily for years, for reasons ranging from spiritual to environmental. But

tificate and an urn bought online. It was a fraction of the \$10,000 to \$16,000 that is typically spent on a traditional funeral and burial. Family and friends remembered Toni Kelly, 54, an art-

Kelly, who raised two sons with his wife during their 28-year marriage. "We had no interest in being put in the ground, no need for a memorial for the whole world to see. Her concern was the financial devastation she was bringing to the family."

Many others share that concern, according to a national telephone survey of 858 adults conducted last year by the Funeral and Memorial Information Council. It found that one-third of those who chose cremation in 2010 said cost was a primary factor, up from 19 percent in 1990.

With the cremation rate rising one-third faster than at the middle of the last decade, the cremation association projects it will pass 50 percent by 2017 (still lagging behind Canada and much of Europe and Asia). Although state cremation rates vary widely, from 13 percent in Mississippi to 73 percent in Nevada, every state has experienced an increase since 2005.

that the family plot had become anachronistic in today's transient society and that cremation afforded relatives and friends more time to gather from afar for a memorial service.

Today, he said, nearly half of his consultations eventually turn to worries about money, and the cremation rate at the company's nine funeral homes has risen to 55 percent, up from 35 percent six years ago.

"People have lost money in the markets," Nicodemus said. "Their retirements aren't what they used to be. A lot are living off Social Security."

Some families, he said, have reversed burial plans because life insurance has lapsed or savings have been drained by uninsured medical expenses.

"We had six families to see yesterday, and all six were cremations," Nicodemus said. "That tells me something."

African-Americans, steeped in the traditions of open-casket funerals and rousing eulogies, remain the most resistant to cremation, according to surveys. But in the Virginia Tidewater, as elsewhere, even that cultural wall is crumbling.

Kenny Alexander, owner of Metropolitan Funeral Service in Norfolk, Va., said there was enough demand in the area's black community to make him consider buying a crematory, a \$125,000 investment. He said two or three of every 10 families that come to him now asked for cremations.

A decade ago, Alexander said, he did not even know how to price one.

"Unemployment, coupled with the downturn in the economy, the realities of people losing their savings and not being insured, has certainly caused African-American families to look at cremation in a different light," Alexander said.

In some instances, he added, families do not want friends to know because it may carry the stigma of financial hardship. "We just say the burial is going to be private," he said. □



Michael Nicodemus of the Cremation Association of North America, in Virginia Beach. If current American trends hold, in 2017, more bodies will be cremated than buried, and funeral directors say the cost is a major factor in the decision, economics being one of the factors driving that change. (Jay Paul/The New York Times)

ried obsessively that her four-year struggle would destroy her family's finances.

Her husband, Doug, refused to consider her pleas to stop pursuing costly therapies. But she knew that after she died, which she did Sept. 29, there was one way she could keep from adding to the \$200,000 in medical debt she would leave behind. Like a growing proportion of Americans, she said she wanted her body to be cremated. "We did everything we could to cut down other costs, and one of the things Toni said was, 'Let's find out how much it costs to be cremated,'" Kelly said. "If there was a way we could save even \$500 or \$1,000, it didn't make a difference. Her major thing was not ruining the family."

All but taboo in the United States 50 years ago, cremation is now chosen over burial in 41 percent of deaths in the U.S., up from 15 percent in 1985, according to the Cremation Association of North America. Economics is clearly one



Urns on display at Hollomon-Brown Funeral Homes and Crematory in Virginia Beach, Va. (Jay Paul/The New York Times)

a recent study shows that the increase has accelerated during the downturn, and many funeral home directors say they believe the economy is leading people to look for less expensive options.

The disposition of Kelly's remains cost about \$1,600, and that total included a death notice, a death cer-

ist, at a simple memorial service at the golf course in Virginia Beach where Doug Kelly works as an assistant pro and where she liked to walk their dogs. It was the first cremation on her side of the family, Doug Kelly said.

"Neither one of us felt that the body itself was really all that important," said

Until recently, said Michael W. Nicodemus, president of the cremation association, concerns about cost rarely entered into his discussions about cremation with families at the Hollomon-Brown funeral homes in Virginia's Tidewater region, where he is a vice president. The rationale for cremation in the past was more typically

SPORTS

Aruba TODAY



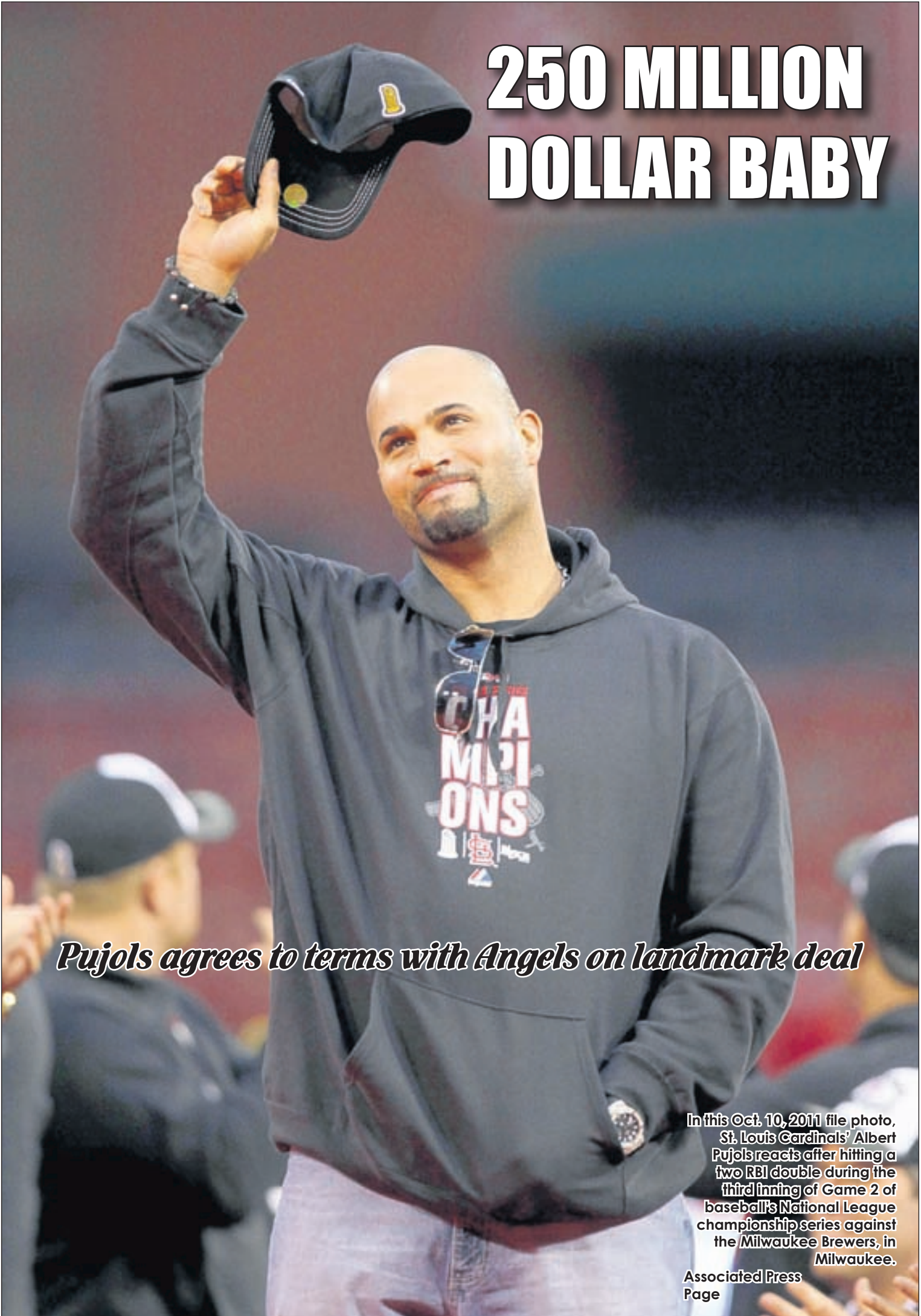
In this Oct. 22, 2011 file photo, Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck smiles on the sidelines in the final minute of an NCAA college football game against Washington in Stanford, Calif.

Associated Press

Luck wins Walter Camp award as player of the year

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP)—Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck has won the Walter Camp Foundation's award as college football's player of the year. The award, in its 45th year, is voted on by the nation's 120 Football Bowl Subdivision head coaches and sports information directors. Luck threw for 3,170 yards and a school-record 35 touchdowns as a senior, leading No. 4 Stanford to an 11-1 record and a bid to play No. 3 Oklahoma State in the Fiesta Bowl. He beat out Baylor quarterback Robert Griffin III, Houston quarterback Case Keenum, Alabama running back Trent Richardson and LSU defensive back Tyrann Mathieu. Luck joins former Cardinal quarterback Jim Plunkett as the only Stanford players to win the Walter Camp award. Luck is 31-6 as a starter at Stanford and holds school career records with 80 touchdowns passing, a 66.4 percent completion percentage and 10,043 yards of total offense. □

250 MILLION DOLLAR BABY



Pujols agrees to terms with Angels on landmark deal

In this Oct. 10, 2011 file photo, St. Louis Cardinals' Albert Pujols reacts after hitting a two RBI double during the third inning of Game 2 of baseball's National League championship series against the Milwaukee Brewers, in Milwaukee.

Associated Press
Page

AP Source: Paul trade to Lakers in the works

By BRETT MARTEL

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A person familiar with the negotiations says the framework of a three-team trade is in place to send Hornets All-Star guard Chris Paul to the Los Angeles Lakers.

The Houston Rockets are the other team involved, the person told The Associated Press Thursday on condition of anonymity because the deal was not finalized.

Paul can opt out of his current contract with New Orleans after this season, and the Hornets have been fielding trade offers in an effort to acquire new players for the star guard rather than letting him walk in free agency.

Paul averaged 15.8 points and 9.8 assists last season. □

Andy Murray's mother to captain Britain in Fed Cup

STUART CONDIE

AP Sports Writer

LONDON (AP) — Andy Murray's mother has been appointed captain of Britain's Fed Cup team.

The Lawn Tennis Association said Thursday that Judy Murray will lead Britain in its Feb. 1-4 Europe-Africa Group I match against Israel in Eilat and mentor other female performance coaches.

Murray, who was Scotland national coach for nine years, trained three-time Grand Slam finalist Andy Murray early in his career and is still a familiar figure at the No. 4-ranked player's matches — regularly jumping to her feet to shout encouragement from the stands.

She also coached son Jamie, a Wimbledon mixed doubles champion in 2007. "It is a huge honor for me to represent my country in this way," Murray said.

"The role presents a very exciting challenge, given



In this Jan. 28, 2010 file photo, Judy Murray, mother of Britain's Andy Murray, reacts as he plays Marin Cilic of Croatia in their men's singles semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia.

Associated Press

the mix of talent, experience and determination we have in our top female players right now.

"I'm also really looking forward to working with the LTA to develop a bigger and stronger female

coaching work force. I want to encourage more women to get involved in coaching at the highest level, and to personally support their development."

Murray has already

coached Britain's top-ranked woman, Elena Baltacha, and has experience with British Davis Cup players Colin Fleming and Jamie Baker.

"To have someone of Judy's standing in the sport in such a key role for us is going to be a huge asset as we look to support our best players and coaches, and begin to climb up the ladder in world tennis," said Leon Smith, LTA head of men's and women's tennis. "I know the players and the rest of the team are really excited about this."

Britain is one of only four nations to compete in every Fed Cup but has never won the competition, losing the last of its four finals in 1981.

Baltacha is the highest-ranked player on the current team at No. 51.

Murray is replacing Nigel Sears, who is the father of Andy Murray's long-term girlfriend. Sears left to coach Ana Ivanovic. □

Kostelic wins season-opening slalom on 2nd run

PAT GRAHAM

AP Sports Writer

BEAVER CREEK, Colorado (AP) — Ivica Kostelic of Croatia turned in a flawless final run to make up valuable time and capture the season-opening World Cup slalom on Thursday.

Kostelic finished in a combined time of 1 minute, 50.20 seconds to hold off Cristian Deville of Italy by 0.14 seconds. Marcel Hirscher of Austria slipped to third.

For once, Kostelic conquered the hill instead of the other way around. He's crashed quite a few times at Birds of Prey, two of which resulted in being carried down by snow patrol on the back of a sled. Three of his nine knee surgeries have come because



Croatia's Ivica Kostelic skis in the first run of the men's World Cup slalom ski competition on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, in Beaver Creek, Colo.

Associated Press

of wipeouts at this venue, and he's also hurt his back on this course.

No wonder he wanted a little revenge.

"It sounds maybe a little over the top now, but I was dreaming of a day when I would beat this course and finally say, 'Now, we're even,'" Kostelic said.

So now Kostelic and the mountain are officially even.

Hirscher held a slim lead after the first run, but Kostelic, the reigning overall champion, made up the deficit with a smooth and steady second run. He didn't think about past falls, just focused on skiing aggressive.

That worked out well as he picked up his 19th World Cup win.

"I had a feeling that today was the day, that today was the moment for settling some old issues with this course," Kostelic said. "I was able to concentrate really well and I said to myself, 'Just ski instinctively. If you

make a mistake, whatever. Just do it. Just ski instinctively.' That's what I did. I really tried to push hard."

Hirscher had a stellar showing at Birds of Prey. He also finished first and second in two giant slalom races.

Like Kostelic, he vanquished some bad memories with his performance.

"Three years ago, me and Beaver Creek had not a good relationship," Hirscher said. "Now, we're getting to be good friends."

Deville wasn't even supposed to be in Beaver Creek. But when a slalom race scheduled for Val d'Isere, France, was canceled due to a lack of snow and relocated to Colorado, he quickly changed his plans.

And while Deville wasn't all that familiar with the hill, it hardly showed as he sped down the course with precision to earn his first spot on the podium. This despite hurting his left foot in August, which hampered his training.

"I can say I'm very, very happy," Deville said. "I like this place." □



Pujols, Angels reach \$254 million, 10-year deal

RONALD BLUM
AP Sports Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Albert Pujols could have been a wealthy Cardinal for life, planning for the day his statue would be erected outside Busch Stadium next to those of Stan Musial, Bob Gibson and the other St. Louis greats.

Instead, exactly six weeks after leading the Cardinals to a second title in one of the most thrilling World Series ever, he decided to accept the second-highest contract in Major League Baseball history for a new future in southern California with the Los Angeles Angels.

The three-time National League MVP agreed on Thursday to a \$254 million, 10-year contract with the Angels, leaving behind a heartbroken fan base by jilting one of MLB's traditional teams for an expansion club with only one championship in its half-century. For MLB, it was a virtually unprecedented move.

Many top stars have changed teams in their careers, from Babe Ruth to Willie Mays to Barry Bonds. But this is perhaps the best player in the game over

the past decade, exiting shortly after one of the great postseason power shows.

A big and burly offensive force with a shaved head, the nine-time All-Star has a room full of honors, winning the 2001 NL rookie of the year award, NL MVPs in 2005, 2008 and 2009, a batting title in 2003 and a pair of Gold Gloves at first base. Who would have predicted that when the Cardinals selected him in the 13th round of the 1999 amateur draft with the 402nd overall selection?

And now, he's going west. As his deal fell into place on the final day of the winter meetings, the Angels struck another big agreement, a \$77.5 million, five-year contract with left-hander C.J. Wilson, the ace whose Texas Rangers lost to the Cardinals in the seven-game World Series.

"This is obviously the moment where we have thrown our hat in the ring," new Angels manager Jerry Dipoto said.

Had he stayed in St. Louis before packed, adoring crowds, Pujols would've established a Cal Ripken-like legacy of loyalty, a rare



In this Oct. 10, 2011 file photo, St. Louis Cardinals' Albert Pujols reacts after hitting a two RBI double during the third inning of Game 2 of baseball's National League championship series against the Milwaukee Brewers, in Milwaukee.



This Oct. 19, 2011 file photo shows Texas Rangers starting pitcher C.J. Wilson throwing during the first inning of Game 1 of baseball's World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals, in St. Louis. The Los Angeles Angels turned their own double play Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, adding free agent pitcher C.J. Wilson to a roster suddenly boosted by the acquisition of Albert Pujols. Wilson agreed to a five-year deal worth about \$75 million, a person familiar with the deal told The

-Associated Press

modern star who remained with a franchise from first at-bat to final swing. Instead, some of his former fans will see him as a sell-out. Pujols rejected a multiyear extension last offseason that was said to include a small percentage of the franchise and cut off negotiations a day before he arrived at spring training. St. Louis also offered the slugger a 10-year deal that chairman Bill DeWitt Jr. said was in excess of \$200 million.

"I would like our fans to know that we tried our best to make Albert a lifetime Cardinal," he said in a statement, adding later in a telephone interview: "They were substantially

higher than our bid."

In St. Louis, Pujols has accomplished so much that he would have been beloved no matter his future performance. But in Anaheim, he will have to prove himself anew.

"I think his body's going to start breaking down and he's not going to be good for 10 years," said Katie Coyle, fitness coordinator at the Webster-Kirkwood YMCA in Missouri, a die-hard fan who wore team colors to work during the playoffs. "I think he's going to regret leaving here. If he'd have stayed here and signed a long-term deal with the Cardinals, they'd have had compassion for him because they've seen him at his best."

Associated Press

Pujols' contract, which like Wilson's is subject to a physical, is only the third to break the \$200 million barrier, following Alex Rodriguez's \$252 million, 10-year deal with Texas before the 2001 season and A-Rod's \$275 million, 10-year agreement with the New York Yankees before the 2008 season. "This is a monumental day for Angel fans and I could not be more excited," said owner Arte Moreno, who bought the team for \$184 million from The Walt Disney Co. in 2003, a year after its only title. Despite a top-four payroll this year, the Angels languished to a second-place finish behind Texas in the American League West division. □

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Giroux scores OT winner; Flyers beat Sabres 5-4

By **Associated Press**

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Claude Giroux scored 2:27 into overtime for the Philadelphia Flyers, who overcame a three-goal, first-period deficit and beat the Buffalo Sabres 5-4 on Wednesday night. Rookie Matt Read, Scott Hartnell, and Jaromir Jagr scored in the second period, and Maxime Talbot added goals for Philadelphia, which led 4-3 in the third. The Flyers (16-7-3) scored four times on 10 shots bridging the first and second periods after falling behind 3-0 to win their third straight. Philadelphia also climbed out of a three-goal hole on Friday at Anaheim and won on another overtime goal by Giroux, who added three assists against the Sabres. Ilya Bryzgalov made 20 saves.

Zack Kassian had a goal and an assist, and Ville Leino, Thomas Vanek, and Drew Stafford also scored for the Sabres (14-11-2), who have lost three of four. Ryan Miller, playing in his second game after returning from a concussion and neck injury, stopped 29 shots.

The Flyers are an NHL-best 10-3-1 on the road. Buffalo has lost six of its last seven at home (1-4-2).

*CAPITALS 5, SENATORS 3

OTTAWA — Alex Ovechkin scored one of three straight goals by Washington in the third period against Ottawa.

Nicklas Backstrom tied it at 2 with his 10th goal on a power play 9:45 into the



Philadelphia Flyers' Claude Giroux (28) celebrates his game-winning goal with teammate Erik Gustafsson (25), of Sweden, during the overtime period of an NHL hockey game against the Buffalo Sabres in Buffalo, N.Y., Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2011. The Flyers won 5-4.

Associated Press

third. He earned his 19th assist on Ovechkin's go-ahead goal at 13:50.

Troy Brouwer scored 15 seconds later to make it a 4-2. John Carlson, who had two assists, scored into an empty net at 19:14 for his third point. Jeff Halpern scored early in the second and Tomas Vokoun made 31 saves for Washington, which has won two of three, including an overtime win over Ottawa on Saturday.

Milan Michalek drew the Senators within one with his team-leading 17th goal on a power play at 16:08. Craig Anderson made 39 saves, and Erik Condra and Nick Foligno scored second-period goals for Ottawa, which has lost three of four (1-2-1).

*HURRICANES 5, OILERS 3

EDMONTON, Alberta — Carolina coach Kirk Muller earned his first win behind the Hurricanes bench, and his club snapped a seven-game losing streak with a victory over Edmonton.

Jeff Skinner, Jamie McBain, Patrick Dwyer, Chad LaRose and Tuomo Ruutu scored for the Hurricanes (9-17-4), who won their first game in five tries under Muller, a first-time NHL coach. Tomas Kaberle added two assists.

Carolina was 0-6-1 in its previous seven games and 0-5 since Muller took over for the fired Paul Maurice on Nov. 28.

In other NHL games it was Washington 5, Ottawa 3; Philadelphia 5, Buffalo 4, OT; and Carolina 5, Edmonton 3. □

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Red Sox plan big bash for Fenway's 100th birthday

JIMMY GOLEN
AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — The Boston Red Sox will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Fenway Park's first game next year with a yearlong celebration that will be heavy on history for the oldest ballpark in Major League Baseball.

"We are going to be the first to do that and, pardon me, but we are going to do it in a major, big-time way," Red Sox president and chief executive officer Larry Lucchino said on Thursday. "This is an important year for us." The actual anniversary will be observed on April 20, 2012, with a 3:05 p.m. game against the New York Yankees — a repeat of the afternoon game the Red Sox played against the Yankees' precursor, the Highlanders, on that date in 1912. The opener — the same week the Titanic sank — was twice delayed by rainouts. (The actual first baseball game at Fenway was an exhibition



Boston Red Sox old timer players, from left, Rico Petrocelli, Johnny Pesky and Lou Lucier applaud at a baseball news conference in Boston on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, announcing upcoming events to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Fenway Park.

Associated Press

against Harvard University. Vice president Sam Kennedy said the school has arranged for representatives to come to the ballpark on April 9, when the Red Sox will be playing in Toronto, for a workout or exhibition to be determined.) The schedule was laid out at a news conference in a club suite as the ballpark

was decked out for Christmas, with giant wreaths hanging from the Green Monster. In attendance were longtime Red Sox player and coach Johnny Pesky and Lou Lucier, who at 95 is the oldest living former Red Sox player. The Red Sox also announced a charitable campaign called "100 Acts



of Kindness," which will involve donations, volunteer efforts and community events. To start, the team donated a copy of its new coffee table book, "Fenway Park: 100 Years" to each branch of the Boston Public Library and to the libraries of all 125 schools in the Boston Public School system. The team also announced that it is forming a not-for-profit called the Preserve Fenway Park Fund, which will raise money to preserve and display historic artifacts

in the ballpark. The team has already documented and preserved more than 4,000 items, including photos, architectural plans, baseballs and ballpark memorabilia including chairs, signs, tickets, lineup cards, bases and championship pennants. Many of these archives will be on display at Fenway during the 2012 season. "We think Fenway Park is a museum. It's also a vibrant, lively ballpark," Lucchino said. "We want it to be both." □



NBA Commissioner David Stern, right, smiles during a news conference alongside Deputy Commissioner Adam Silver following a day of meetings that ended with the ratification of a new collective bargaining agreement, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, in New York.

Associated Press

NBA owners, players approve new labor deal

BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — NBA team owners and players ratified a new collective bargaining agreement Thursday, the final step to ending the five-month lockout and paving the way for training camps and free agency to open Friday. NBA commissioner David Stern the improvements to the league may not be noticed right away, but the

"tortured journey" of the 161-day lockout will prove to be worth it. Together with an expanded revenue sharing program, Stern said teams and fans will see an improved league in coming years. "It's a new beginning in a way," he said. "It's going to take a couple of years to work its way out, but we're very excited about its prospects." The 10-year deal promises

owners savings of perhaps a quarter billion dollars a year but largely leaves intact the soft salary cap system that the players fought hard to maintain. Stern and Deputy Commissioner Adam Silver announced the deal during a press conference, putting an end to nearly two years of difficult negotiations that resulted in the second shortened season in NBA history. □

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Study faults partial radiation for cancer

MARILYNN MARCHIONE

AP Chief Medical Writer

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — New

research casts doubt on a popular treatment for breast cancer: A week of radiation to part of the breast instead of longer treatment to all of it.

Women who were given partial radiation were twice as likely to need their breasts removed later because the cancer came back, doctors found.

The treatment uses radioactive pellets briefly placed in the breast instead of radiation beamed from a machine.

At least 13 percent of older patients in the U.S. get this now, and it is popular with working women.

"Even women who aren't working appreciate convenience," but they may pay a price in effectiveness if too little tissue is being treated, said study leader Dr. Benjamin Smith of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

Results were to be reported Wednesday at a conference in Texas along with a more positive development: a new test that may help show which women need only surgery for a very early type of breast cancer called DCIS. The results suggest that about three-fourths of the 45,000 women diagnosed with DCIS annually in the U.S. could skip the radiation and hormone-blocking pills usually recommended to prevent a recurrence.



Rachel Midgett of Houston, Texas, foreground, stretches with Heather Keister of Lubbock, Texas before heading to the start line to run in the half marathon of the Las Vegas Marathon, in Las Vegas. Afflicted with breast cancer, Midgett has been taking the drug Afinitor for the last nine months and said that the cancer has not progressed in that time period, longer than other cancer drugs she has taken in the past.

(AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

About 230,000 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed each year in the U.S., most in an early stage. Typical treatment is surgery to remove the lump, followed by radiation every week-day for five to seven weeks. That's tough, especially for older women and those in

rural areas.

Doctors hoped that a shorter approach, called brachytherapy, would be just as good with fewer side effects. To do it, they temporarily place a thin tube into the cavity where the tumor was.

"You come in twice a day and there's a machine that puts in a radiation seed that stays there a few minutes and then you go home," Smith explained.

Treatment takes only five days and the total radiation dose is comparable to the longer method. But a smaller area — just around

the lump — gets treated instead of the whole breast.

Although at least three companies sell equipment for brachytherapy, no big studies have tested its safety and effectiveness.

Researchers looked at Medicare records on 130,535 women who had lumps removed and radiation.

Less than 1 percent chose brachytherapy in 2000 but that rose to 13 percent by 2007.

After accounting for differences in age, tumor size and other factors, researchers found that within five years, 4 percent of brachytherapy patients needed surgery to remove the breast where the original tumor had been versus only 2 percent of those given traditional radiation. Hospitalization, infections, broken ribs and breast pain also were more common with brachytherapy.

It remains experimental, and women who want it should join a more rigorous study of it going on now, said Dr. Peter Ravdin, breast cancer chief at the UT Health Science Center in San Antonio.

"I'm putting patients on the trial" and not recommending it otherwise, he said. □

Clinton warns of gene tech threat

FRANK JORDANS

Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — New gene

assembly technology that offers great benefits for scientific research could also be used by terrorists to create biological weapons, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton warned Wednesday.

The threat from bioweapons has drawn little attention in recent years, as governments focused more on the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation to countries such as Iran and North Korea.

But experts have warned that the increasing ease with which bioweapons can be created might be used by terror groups to develop and spread new diseases that could mimic the effects of the fictional global epidemic portrayed in the Hollywood thriller "Contagion."

Speaking at an international meeting in Geneva aimed at reviewing the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, Clinton told diplomats that the challenge was to maximize the benefits of scientific research and minimize the risks that it could be used for harm. Gene synthesis allows genetic material — the building blocks of all organisms — to be artificially assembled in the lab, greatly speeding up the creation of artificial viruses and bacteria. □

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Hollywood flubs movie system launch, miffs users

RYAN NAKASHIMA

AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) —

Warner Bros. is learning a hard lesson about launching an ill-conceived product in the age of social media.

When the studio introduced its first movies on the new "UltraViolet" format in October, consumers were led to believe they could buy a DVD or Blu-ray, register their ownership of the movie on the UltraViolet website and then receive—at no extra cost—a digital version that could play on their computer, tablet or mobile phone.

The studio's aim was to encourage people to purchase movies rather than rent them or subscribe to a streaming service. But UltraViolet didn't work as advertised. Some users were confused because the process required them to register on the UltraViolet website as well as on another website called Flixster, a movie site owned by Warner Bros. Users had to install special software before they could view movies on their computers. To make matters worse, it didn't work as advertised for owners of Apple's iPhones and iPads.

Within days, befuddled consumers took to Twitter and the Internet to complain. Jarren Wood, an art student from Atlanta, tweeted that he felt "conned" and called UltraViolet "a horrible hoax." Blogger Bryan Darrow tweeted, "Flixster sucks. I want my digital copy."

Among thousands of posts about UltraViolet on social-media sites in the weeks following the Oct. 11 launch, only 3 percent of comments were positive, according to Fizziology, a company that tracks buzz related to Hollywood movie releases. Some 17 percent were negative and the rest were neutral. That's on par with the worst product receptions the firm has ever seen. The message from Warner Bros. "seems to be as complicated as the sign-up process. Both would benefit from simplification," says Beth Monaghan, co-founder of public relations firm InkHouse. "If we've learned

anything from Apple, it's that a simple message wins almost every time."

Warner's UltraViolet fiasco showcases the stark differences between Hollywood and Silicon Valley when it comes to innovation. To lure consumers, technology companies strive to make their products and services easy to use. Hollywood tends to sacrifice user convenience to maintain existing cash cows.

One recent dud was an attempt to sell cards for \$15 at Wal-Mart that gave consumers permanent access to the Sony Pictures movie "Battle: Los Angeles" at Wal-Mart's Vudu streaming site. With movies available for rental at \$4 and up, few jumped at the offer. Another misfire: For most of a decade, the studios couldn't agree on a high-definition format before they finally settled on Blu-ray a few years ago.

As more people flock to digital movie streaming, online rentals and subscription services, Hollywood is trying to persuade consumers to buy and collect movies. The push comes as



This image provided by Ultraviolet shows a screen image as it appears on their website, explaining the ultraviolet system.

Associated Press

U.S. sales of DVDs and Blu-ray discs have fallen by a third — from \$10.3 billion to roughly \$7 billion — in the past seven years. At the same time, Apple, Amazon, Hulu, Netflix and others have lured customers by offering cheaper alternatives to movie ownership. UltraViolet, the industry's latest scheme to promote movie ownership, attempts to make DVDs and Blu-rays more attractive by offering consumers the option of

receiving a digital copy of a movie they buy on disc. Those digital versions, of course, are more versatile than discs, and — in theory at least — can be placed on mobile phones and tablet devices.

But it took two weeks for Heath Parks, a 43-year-old technology buff in Cincinnati, to get UltraViolet to work, even after exchanging emails with Flixster CEO Joe Greenstein.

Parks says it would have

been easier to use unlicensed software to copy "Green Lantern" from the discs himself.

"I could have ripped it. I could have done any of this stuff. The point is I didn't want to do that," he says in an interview. "My personal feeling is they rushed the service out. I don't think it's ready." Warner Bros. declined comment to the AP. Greenstein, the Flixster CEO, later sent Parks an email, saying he was "incredibly sorry for the awful initial experience" and gave Parks free copies of two other movies.

UltraViolet is backed by Warner Bros. and four other major studios. It was supposed to allow a consumer to buy a movie once and almost magically have it be available on their TV, smartphone, tablet computer or any other device. This would all happen simply because the consumer's ownership of the movie had been recorded online. Consumers would be able to share viewing privileges with family members in other locations, without having to buy a new copy. □

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Lack of ECB bond-buying plan sends stocks lower

MATT CRAFT

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Dow Jones industrial average dropped nearly 200 points Thursday after the head of the European Central Bank said there was no plan for large-scale purchases of European government bonds, as many in the markets had hoped.

ECB President Mario Draghi's remarks sent borrowing costs soaring for Italy, Spain and other countries with heavy debt burdens. European stock indexes fell and the euro weakened against the dollar. Draghi made his comments after the central bank cut its benchmark interest rate to 1 percent and took other modest steps to help shore up Europe's fi-



Lights in the colors of the Italian flag illuminate people crowding Rome's Via Del Corso shopping street Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011. Italy's borrowing rates rose Thursday after the ECB's President Mario Draghi said he had no existing plan to step up purchases of the country's bonds, as investors had been hoping. Much of the recent rally in stock markets and the sharp fall in Italy's borrowing rates had been due to expectations that a deal among European leaders to get the 17 euro countries to accept tough budget oversight would be followed by more aggressive action by the ECB.

(AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

500 index fell 26.66, or 2.1 percent, to 1,234.35. The Nasdaq lost 52.83, or 2 percent, to 2,596.38.

The dollar and U.S. Treasury prices rose as traders shifted money into assets seen as relatively safe.

The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note dipped to 1.97 percent from 2.03 percent late Tuesday.

In France, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel tried to muster support from other European leaders for their latest bid to save the euro currency from collapsing under the weight of huge government debts.

A summit that began late Thursday has been billed as a make-or-break moment to convince markets that Europe will take bold enough action to prevent the euro from breaking up. Reports that Germany had rejected some proposals for stemming the crisis sent the Dow lower in the last half-hour of trading.

The yield on benchmark 10-year Italian government bonds jumped half a percentage point, a huge move, to 6.47 percent as investors sold European government debt following Draghi's remarks. □



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nancial system. Bank stocks led the way lower. Citigroup Inc. plunged 7 percent; Morgan Stanley 8.4 percent. JPMorgan Chase & Co. slid 5.2 percent, the most of the 30 large companies in the Dow average.

"People are very nervous that Europe will yet again fail to adequately address the sovereign debt crisis," says David Kelly, chief market strategist for JP Morgan Funds. He says investors overlooked good news on the U.S. economy

Thursday: Claims for unemployment benefits dropped, and wholesale companies increased their inventories in expectation of stronger sales.

The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 198.67 points, or 1.6 percent, to close at 11,997.70.

The drop was the worst since Nov. 23 and ended a three-day run of modest gains. The last time the Dow closed below 12,000 was Nov. 29.

The Standard & Poor's

Canada OKs Total oil sands project

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — The Canadian government announced Thursday the approval of a massive oil sands mine owned by a subsidiary of French oil firm Total SA. Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver said Thursday the environmental assessment for the Joslyn North mine project proposed by Total SA subsidiary Total E&P has been approved.

The Joslyn project was first proposed six years ago and has gone through regulatory hurdles and faced opposition from environmental group. Oliver said the long lag shows the need for a more efficient regulatory system. Total E&P said the Joslyn North Mine is expected to produce 100,000 barrels per day over its 20 year

lifespan with first production planned for 2018. The open pit mine will cover an area of 221 square kilometers in Northern Alberta.

Oliver said the oil sands are expected to provide thousands of jobs over the next 25 years.

Alberta has the third-largest oil reserves in the world with more than 170 billion barrels of proven reserves. □

European Union weighs greater unity to save euro

DON MELVIN

GABRIELE STEINHAUSER

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European leaders were wrestling Thursday over how much of their sovereignty they are willing to give up in a desperate attempt to save the ambitious project of continental unity that grew from the ashes of World War II.

At stake at the summit in Brussels not is not only the future of the euro, but also the stability of the global financial system and the balance of power in Europe.

To convince financial markets that Europe's economy-crushing debt crisis is a one-time event, countries will have to give up significant powers, such as some decisions on borrowing and spending, to a central authority.

President Nicolas Sarkozy and Chancellor Angela Merkel want to convince the other 15 eurozone leaders to agree to a plan that would require their governments to balance their budgets and accept automatic sanctions if they don't. At the same time, the currency bloc's largest economies are being pushed to commit more money to boost the eurozone's firewalls as the crisis threatens to pull down Italy and Spain.

The overall plan must be good enough to convince the European Central Bank to intervene in the government bond markets in a manner large enough



Activists of Frankfurt Occupy movement offer to change their makeshift "occupy global currency" against Euros during a demonstration in front of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt, Germany, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011. The ECB decided to lower their key interest rate to one percent.

(AP Photo/Michael Probst)

to stop the panic there, said Paul De Grauwe, an economics professor and EU expert at the Catholic University of Leuven, in Belgium. The president of the ECB said the bank currently has no plan to increase the scale of its bond interventions, which could keep down the borrowing costs of weak countries like Italy and Spain, as markets had been hoping. Stocks and the euro fell, while the borrowing rates for Italy and Spain skyrocketed.

ECB chief Mario Draghi had hinted last week that if governments agree to tighter budget controls, the central bank might step up support. Analysts said his comments on Thursday served to keep pressure on politicians to reach a deal. Merkel and Sarkozy want to enshrine the tougher bud-

get oversight in a treaty, either by changing the existing EU treaty or creating a new one for the 17 eurozone nations that others could opt in to.

An EU official said that in the first hours of the summit, leaders agreed that national debt brakes should limit deficits before debt and interest payments to 0.5 percent of annual economic output. The official was speaking on condition of anonymity because the talks were ongoing.

The 0.5 percent limit, which could only be exceeded in exceptional situations or to counteract a recession, is stricter than the 3 percent cap set out in current EU law, although the 3 percent also includes interest and debt payments.

"Words alone are not believed anymore because

too often we did not live up to our words," Merkel told a rally of fellow European conservatives in Marseille, France, ahead of the summit. But huge divisions remain.

Some countries resist the idea of giving up some of their control over national budgets. Furthermore, the 10 EU countries that don't use the euro are worried about being left out of important decision-making if

eurozone countries adopt a new treaty of their own. European Council President Herman Van Rompuy and some smaller countries that have stuck to the budget rules in the past, meanwhile, are pushing for much more intrusive powers for European institutions to essentially take over wayward states' fiscal policies that even France and Germany are unlikely to accept. □

Treasury prices higher on worries over Europe

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. government bond prices rose Thursday as nervous investors shifted money into conservative assets over worries that a solution to the European debt crisis might not be reached soon.

The price of the benchmark 10-year Treasury note rose 56.2 cents for every \$100 invested.

The higher price lowered its yield to 1.97 percent from

2.03 percent late Wednesday.

The European Central Bank President Mario Draghi said there was no existing plan for large-scale government bond purchases, as investors had hoped.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed down 198 points.

Draghi's remarks sent borrowing costs soaring for Italy, Spain and other coun-

tries with heavy debt burdens.

The 30-year Treasury bond rose \$1.43, and its yield dropped to 2.99 percent from 3.06 percent Wednesday. The yield on the two-year note inched down to 0.23 percent from 0.24 percent.

In the market for T-bills, the three-month bill paid a yield of 0.01 percent. Its discount was unavailable. □

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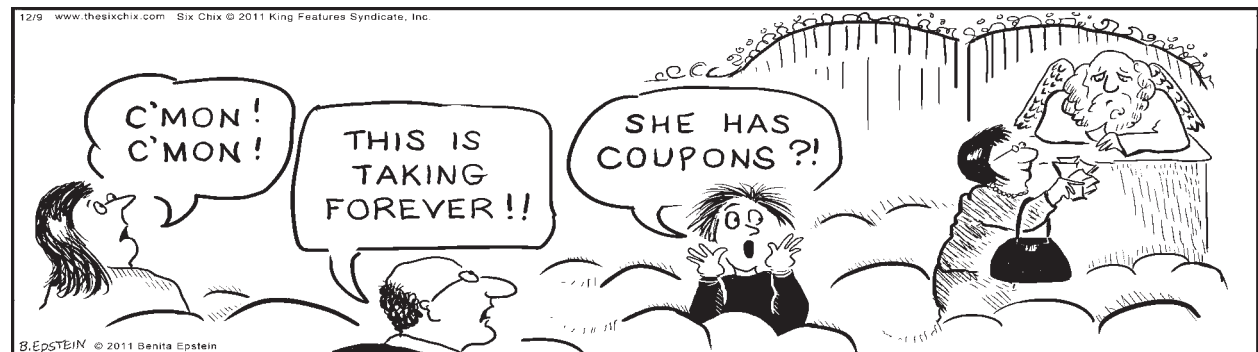
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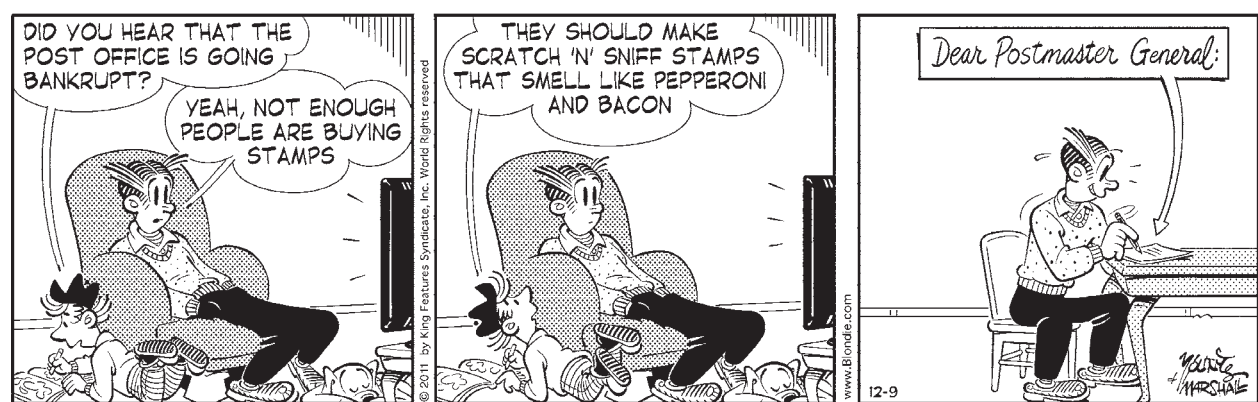
Mutts



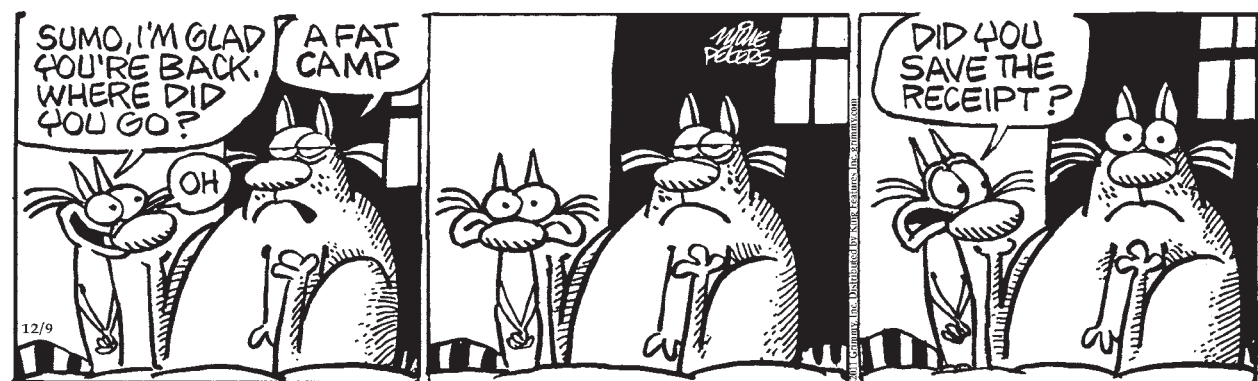
6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	5		2					6
		6					4	
		1	4				7	
			3		1	5		9
6		2	5		4			
		4			7	2		
		7				1		
	2				8		5	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/09

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

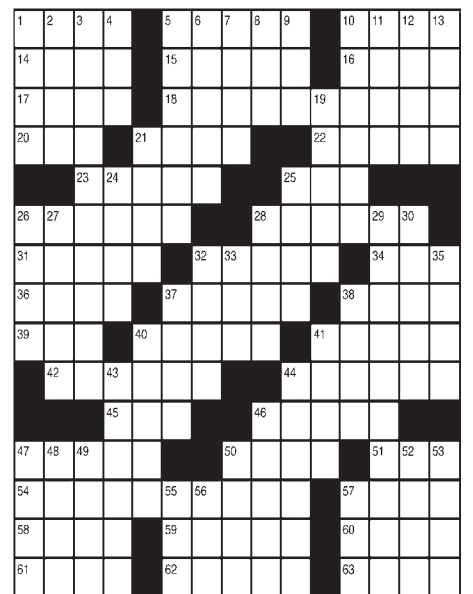
8	1	4	2	6	9	5	7	3
2	9	5	7	3	4	6	8	1
3	6	7	8	1	5	4	2	9
1	5	8	3	4	6	7	9	2
7	3	9	5	8	2	1	4	6
4	2	6	1	9	7	3	5	8
5	8	1	4	2	3	9	6	7
6	7	2	9	5	1	8	3	4
9	4	3	6	7	8	2	1	5

ACROSS

- Chopped meat concoction
- Sly; secretive
- Envelop
- Poker bet
- "Ready or not! Here I am!"
- Slacken
- Plant with fronds
- Chinese dining implements
- Deuce
- Canary food bit
- Take forcefully
- Makes invalid
- Baby goat
- TV's "___ & Lacey"
- Archer's projectiles
- Plant pest
- Spring month
- Shade tree
- Blemish
- Glasses, for short
- Ice on the sea
- Perpendicular building add-on
- ___ on; tramples
- Mea ___; apology
- Corrected text
- Cleansed
- Poorly lit
- Backslide
- Place for a boutonniere
- Acceptable
- Mother sheep
- Evening up; making fair
- Slender
- One of 100s after a perm
- Traveler's stop
- Steerer's place
- Holbrook and Linden
- Group formed to help a sheriff
- Swirling water

DOWN

- Weapon handle
- Once again



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/9/11

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

A	I	R		A	C	M	E	S		S	C	A	T
A	R	I	D		C	H	I	R	P		H	O	B
H	I	D	E		C	O	N	G	A		O	N	E
				S	E	C	L	I	O	N		G	E
				E	A	S	E			G	N	U	
S	T	A	N	C	E			C	O	L	O	N	I
P	O	N	C	E		G	I	V	E	N		D	E
A	N	D				L	I	V	E	D		K	E
T	I	E		B	E	G	I	N		Y	E	A	S
E	C	S	T	A	T	I	C		B	A	R	L	E
				U	G	H				T	U	R	N
E	P	I	C		A	T	T	O	R	N	E	E	S
G	U	N	K		R	I	O	T		L	E	A	D
O	N	C	E		G	L	O	A	T		S	A	G
S	T	A	R		Y	E	L	L	S		H	A	W

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12/9/11

- Fortress; haven
- Laying bird
- Actress Tyson
- Cramps
- Not naughty
- Napoleon or Hirohito: abbr.
- Affirmative
- Freak
- Marathon
- ___ for; requests
- Nuisance
- Spin
- Iditarod vehicle
- College credit
- Actor ___ Kristofferson
- In ___; lest
- Red Delicious or McIntosh
- Bands of sparks
- Rich
- Hillside
- Mimicked
- Vigor
- Anthropologist Margaret ___
- Wineglass part
- Complain
- Not moving
- ___ Cod
- High principles
- Get by devious means
- ___ up; forms a queue
- ___ Walesa of Poland
- Greenish-blue
- Knitting stitch
- Is the right size
- Untamed
- TV show
- Mischief-maker
- Animal park
- That woman

Report:

Reuse of closed US auto plants on the rise

JEFF KAROUB

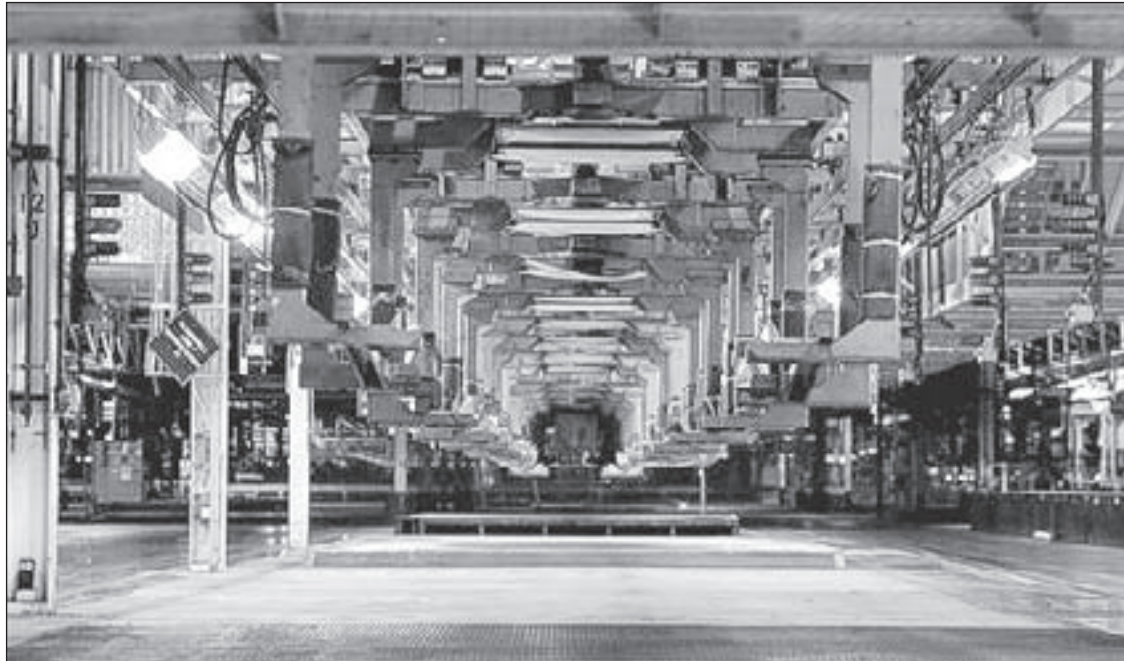
AP Business Writer

DETROIT (AP) — About half of all U.S. automotive plants that have closed since 1979 are being reused, and much of that activity has come during the recent hard times for the industry and real estate market, according to a report released Thursday. The Ann Arbor,

in closed plants available during that same period, the lower assessed value of real estate properties make them more affordable to people with available capital to purchase them," Valerie Sathe Brugeman, one of the report's authors, told The Associated Press. Still, the upward trend doesn't erase the fact that more

report said that of the 139 shuttered plants, 36 percent closed in the 1980s and '90s, which means they have been closed for at least a decade without finding new life. Most are concentrated in the Midwest, with 65 percent of all closed facilities in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. The region also has the highest

plant in suburban Wixom, Michigan, which closed in 2008, highlights the challenge. Bill Ford, Ford's executive chairman and Henry Ford's great-grandson, arrived at the shuttered auto plant in 2009 to promote a plan to revive the vast empty space: Investors planned to transform it into a modern factory to make solar panels and high-tech energy systems instead of Town Cars and Thunderbirds. □



The 320-acre Ford Motor Company Wixom Assembly Plant is shown vacant in Wixom, Mich. About half of all U.S. automotive plants that have closed since 1979 are being reused, and much of that activity has come during the recent hard times for the industry and real estate market, according to a report released Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011. Still, the upward trend doesn't erase the fact that more than half the empty, hulking plants or concrete prairies remain closed. The report said that of the 139 shuttered plants, 36 percent closed in the 1980s and '90s, which means they have been closed for at least a decade without finding new life. Most are concentrated in the Midwest, with 65 percent of all closed facilities in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. The region also has the highest concentration of operating plants.

(AP Photo/Paul Sancya)

Michigan-based nonprofit Center for Automotive Research's report found that of the 267 assembly and parts plants closed during that period, 128 have found or are finding new life. Forty percent of the sites surveyed were bought for a new use between 2008 and 2010, during which the companies now known as General Motors Co. and Chrysler Group LLC went through restructuring and bankruptcy reorganization. The period of rejuvenation also came during the end of a decade in which more than 42 percent of the plants closed. The report noted that few sites found a new owner or use before 2000. "There are certain factors that could contribute to that phenomenon, such as the increase

than half the empty, hulking plants or concrete prairies remain closed. The

concentration of operating plants. A sprawling former Ford

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NASA rover prepares for 5th winter on Mars



This image provided by NASA shows a fragment along the rim of Endeavour Crater where the Mars rover Opportunity has been exploring since August.

Associated Press

ALICIA CHANG
AP Science Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — NASA's lone surviving Mars

rover has been busy exploring its surroundings since it rolled up to its latest crater destination four

months ago. Now the solar-powered Opportunity is in search of a place to spend its fifth winter.

The robot geologist has been scouting out sites along the crater rim that not only have interesting rocks to examine but also ample sunshine. The hardy rover survived four previous Martian winters. Scientists expect no different and even drew up a to-do list. Opportunity will "keep active all winter long," said Bruce Banerdt, rover project scientist at NASA headquarters.

Among its chores: studying bedrock and soil at its chosen winter site. While Opportunity can drive short distances from one outcrop to another, it can't venture far in the cold.

It's a bittersweet juncture for Opportunity, which along with its twin, Spirit, landed on opposite sides of the red planet in January 2004. Both operated beyond their original three-month mission and found geologic evidence that Mars once was warmer and wetter than it is today. Spirit suddenly stopped

communicating with Earth last year, shortly after it became stuck in fluffy sand. NASA diligently listened for any sign from Spirit and finally gave up this past spring.

Despite Spirit's demise, Opportunity continued to trek across the Martian plains and arrived at the western rim of Endeavour Crater in August. The rover has wowed scientists with discoveries at the site, which includes rocks and soil unlike any it has encountered during its years roaming the planet.

Opportunity recently uncovered a mineral deposit that formed from water flowing out of volcanic rocks.

Chief scientist Steve Squyres of Cornell University called it the "single most powerful piece of evidence" that Opportunity has found so far of liquid water existing on Mars long ago.

The finding was presented Wednesday at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco. With a little over 21 miles (33 kilometers) on its odometer, Opportunity is showing some wear, including an arthritic shoulder, but is otherwise in good health.

"It's going on eight years, but we're not done yet," said Ray Arvidson, the mission deputy scientist from Washington University in St. Louis. □

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ENTERTAINMENT

Reality show star Duggar suffers miscarriage

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (AP) — An Arkansas woman who stars on the TLC reality show "19 Kids and Counting" has suffered a miscarriage after announcing she was expecting her 20th child.

Jim Bob Duggar said in a statement that he and his wife, Michelle, were told at a doctor's appointment Thursday morning that she had miscarried. He says she is resting comfortably at home and asked for privacy.

Michelle Duggar announced last month she was expecting her 20th child in April and had said she wasn't worried, despite the premature birth of their youngest child two years ago. She said last month that she had made



In this Dec. 19, 2008 file picture, Michelle Duggar is shown in Rogers, Ark. Associated Press

it through the first trimester safely.

The reality show chronicles the family's home life. The couple has said they don't use birth control. □

Rapper 50 Cent releasing fitness book, food guide



In this Oct. 26, 2011 file photo, rapper and businessman Curtis Jackson III, known as 50 Cent, poses during an interview in New York.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — 50 Cent has rapped about getting rich. Now he's focusing on getting fit. The hip-hop star is putting out a fitness book that's set to be published in January 2013 by Avery Books. Titled "Formula 50: A 6-Week Total Body Transformation Plan," the book will tout

metabolic resistance training as the key to getting in shape. It will also include a nutrition guide. □

Questlove: NBC clearing Roots songs for Fallon

MESFIN FEKADU Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — NBC is now checking the songs the Roots play on "Late Night with Jimmy Fallon" after the band performed an off-color song during Michele Bachmann's show appearance last month. Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson of The Roots says now he's "gotta clear a lot of the song choices" with the network.

"It's still a comedy show, so they promise not to step on my toes or that type of thing, but they definitely want to know the title of the song, the subject matter of the song, can it be seen as an insult?" he said in an interview Thursday. □

Jay-Z to raise money, perform at Carnegie Hall



Shawn "Jay Z" Carter attends a press event to announce his Carnegie Hall performances to benefit the United Way and the Shawn Carter Scholarship Foundation, in New York, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011.

Associated Press

MESFIN FEKADU

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Jay-Z didn't graduate from high school, but he's encouraging others to value their education.

The rapper announced Thursday that he will perform two shows at New

York's Carnegie Hall in February to benefit the Shawn Carter Scholarship Foundation and the United Way of New York City.

"Education is super important," Jay-Z said. "I don't have a high school diploma or a college diploma, but still for me to articulate,

I had to have some form of schooling to articulate my thoughts."

The concerts will take place on Feb. 6 and Feb. 7. Tickets in the private sale will range from \$500 to \$2500. The press conference announced Jay-Z as the first solo hip-hop artist to play at the famed venue, though Wyclef Jean performed at there in 2001 with Stevie Wonder, Eric Clapton and Whitney Houston.

"I feel like they bent the rules so that could make sense for me right now, but I'll take it," Jay-Z said with a laugh.

Jay-Z says performing at the venue is a big deal for hip-hop, and he's happy to bring the genre to greater heights.

"Any time that I get a chance to expand and broaden the reach of hip-hop is a great thing for me on a personal level," he said. □

Adele tops iTunes song, album charts on 2011 sales

NEW YORK (AP)

— Adele dominated music



In this Feb. 15, 2011 file photo, Adele performs on stage during the Brit Awards 2011 at The O2 Arena in London.

this year, and iTunes was no exception. The British songstress had iTunes' best-selling album and song, and she was named its top artist. Adele's "21" album was the most popular, followed by "Sigh No More" by Mumford & Sons, Lil Wayne's "Tha Carter IV," Jay-Z and Kanye West's

"Watch the Throne" and Coldplay's "Mylo Xyloto" (MY'-loh ZY'-luh-toh). Adele's No. 1 hit "Rolling in the Deep" was the best-selling song. At No. 2 was LMFAO's "Party Rock Anthem," followed by Katy Perry's "Firework," Bruno Mars' "Grenade" and Cee Lo Green's "Forget You." □



In this April 20, 2011 file photo, musician Questlove attends the world premiere of "The Union" featured as the opening night gala screening at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York.

Associated Press

Barbara Walters gets 'Fascinating' on her special

By **FRAZIER MOORE**

NEW YORK (AP) — On her new TV special, Barbara Walters gets up close and personal with Donald Trump.

Maybe too personal.

"We started with his hair," confides Walters. "He said: 'Pull it and you can see that it's not a hairpiece.'"

"So I did. And I still think it's a hairpiece."

Trump — the follically perplexing tycoon, personality and sometime presidential candidate — is on Walters' list of "The 10 Most Fascinating People of 2011," which airs on ABC on Wednesday at 9:30 p.m. EST. It's the 19th annual compilation of the year's most prominent names in entertainment, sports and popular culture. Walters says she questioned Trump on his year of political adventures, which included commandeering the "birther" bandwagon by stoking doubt about President Barack Obama's U.S. citizenship, and by teasing voters with the prospect of his stepping into the presidential race as a Republican candidate (Trump, of course, then opted not to take the leap).

"But he still is talking about running," Walters says. "He told me, 'If the Republicans pick the wrong person, if the economy continues to be bad, I would certainly consider running as an independent.'"

Other "Fascinating People" include talent-show baron Simon Cowell, pop singing sensation Katy Perry, and New York Yankees star Derek Jeter, who tells Walters that he'd like to own an



athletic team.

"I told him, 'You're making a lot of money. You could buy one,'" reports Walters. "And he says, 'Great. I'll buy one with you.' We made a deal." Also on board are Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Eric Stonestreet, the loving on-screen couple from ABC's comedy hit "Modern Family," and the Kardashians, Walters says she plays a game with them, quizzing them on who's the smartest, the nicest, the one Mom likes best.

Speaking of sisters Kim, Kourtney and Khloe, Walters offers an explanation for all the popularity that's been showered on celebrities who readily admit they have no talents worth celebrating.

"They're pretty women, they're glamorous and they don't know private from public," Walters says. "And

they're part of a family — one for all and all for one — that people relate to."

Other "Fascinating" names include Pippa Middleton, dishy sister of British royal Kate, and Amanda Knox, the former Seattle exchange student whose four years in custody ended in October when an Italian court overturned her murder conviction in the death of her roommate.

A ninth name — likely to be a political figure — is yet to be announced.

The year's Most Fascinating Person will, as usual, be withheld until the 90-minute broadcast airs.

Walters calls the show "exciting, because it was fun to do.

And these were easy interviews. There was no pulling teeth."

But though she professes pride in this year's honor roll, she hastens to point out its ephemeral nature. □

Sentencing delayed for Jodie Foster's dad

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Scheduling issues have delayed the sentencing of Jodie Foster's estranged father, who faces more than 25 years behind bars after being convicted of bilking more than \$100,000 from the poor and elderly in a home-building scheme. City attorney's spokesman Frank Mateljan (mah-

TEHL'-jin) says Lucius Foster will return to court Friday morning.

The 89-year-old was convicted of 21 misdemeanor counts of grand theft Wednesday after a jury determined he had bilked 21 people out of money.

He was expected to be sentenced Thursday but could not be returned from

jail to court in time.

Lucius Foster was convicted of taking \$5,000 each from people for whom he promised to build affordable homes made from cargo containers.

The units were never built, and prosecutors alleged he blatantly lied to clients. □

Jerry Robinson, Batman's Joker artist, dies in U.S.

VERENA DOBNIK

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Comic book industry pioneer Jerry Robinson, who helped create Batman sidekick Robin the Boy Wonder and their arch-nemesis The Joker, has died at age 89.

An editor and friend,



In this undated photo provided by Mark Evanier, artist Jerry Robinson is shown. Robinson, who helped create Batman's sidekick, "Robin," and "The Joker" in the "Batman" comics, died Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2011 in New York. He was 89.

Associated Press

Charles Kochman, said Robinson was different from most artists in the field because he worked on every kind of comic genre, from political cartoons to theater illustrations.

"Jerry brought a realism to comics — and a sense of humor," said Kochman, his editor at Abrams Comic Arts, which last year published a book called "Jerry Robinson: Ambassador of Comics."

Robinson not only used his fame and position in the industry to serve as its ambassador but also fought on behalf of other artists and creators — especially to win credit for their work, including the Superman series. Initially, in the 1930s

and '40s, publishers owned the rights and would discard drawings after they were used.

Robinson, who died in his sleep Wednesday at his New York home, was a native of New Jersey. He was only 17 when he was hired by Batman creator Bob Kane. The two had met by chance at a resort in the Catskill Mountains, where Robinson had a summer job selling ice cream. Kane noticed Robinson because he was wearing a white jacket decorated with his own illustrations.

In the early 1940s, Robinson "illustrated some of the defining images of pop culture's greatest icons," said Jim Lee, co-publisher of DC Entertainment Inc., the parent company of Batman publisher DC Comics. While Robinson is credited by many comic enthusiasts as the primary creator of The Joker for issue No. 1 of Batman, he and Kane clashed over who was first to dream up the caped crusader's archenemy. In a 1994 interview, Kane said he and writer Bill Finger had come up with the idea and Robinson then produced a joker playing card for inspiration.

Robinson was hired away from Kane's shop by the Batman publisher, for which he drew many of the most striking covers from the golden age of comics, such as that of "Batman" No. 13, showing the caped crusader parachuting down.

In the 1950s, he started drawing newspaper comic strips, political cartoons and cover illustrations for Broadway's "Playbill."

Later in life, Robinson taught at New York's School of Visual Arts and was president of the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists and the National Cartoonists Society.

"He saw the value of comics as an art," Kochman said.

Mike Marts, editor of the Batman line at DC Comics, said Robinson was "an innovator, a pioneer in storytelling." □

Joining a dinner in a Muslim Brotherhood home



NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF
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CAIRO – If you want to understand the Islamic forces that are gaining strength in Egypt and scaring people here and abroad, let me tell you about my dinner in the home of Muslim Brotherhood activists. First, meet my hostess: Sondos Asem, a 24-year-old woman who is pretty much the opposite of the stereotypical bearded Brotherhood activist. Sondos is a middle-class graduate of the American University in Cairo, where I studied in the early 1980s (“that’s before I was born,” she said wonderingly, making me feel particularly decrepit). She speaks perfect English, is writing a master’s thesis on social media, and helps run the Brotherhood’s English-language Twitter feed, (AT)Ikhwanweb. The Muslim Brotherhood has emerged as the dominant political party in parliamentary voting because of people like Sondos and her family. My interviews with supporters suggest that the Brotherhood is far more complex than the caricature that scares many Americans. Sondos rails at the Western presumption that the Muslim Brotherhood would oppress women. She notes that her own mother, Manal Abul Hassan, is one of many female Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated candidates running for Parliament. “It’s a big misconception that the Muslim Brotherhood marginalizes women,” Sondos said. “Fifty percent of the Brotherhood are women.” I told Sondos that Westerners are fearful partly because they have watched the authorities oppress women in the name of Islam in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan. “I don’t think Egypt can ever be compared to Saudi Arabia or Iran or Afghanistan,” she replied. “We, as Egyptians, are religiously very moderate.” A much better model for Egypt, she said, is Turkey, where an Islamic party is presiding over an economic boom. I asked about female circumcision, also called female genital mutilation, which is inflicted on the overwhelming majority of girls in Egypt. It is particularly common in conservative religious households and, to its credit, the Mubarak government made some effort to stop the practice. Many worry that a more democratic government won’t challenge a practice that has broad support. “The Muslim Brotherhood is against the brutal practice of female circumcision,” Sondos said bluntly.

She insisted that women overall would benefit from Brotherhood policies that focus on the poor: “We believe that a solution of women’s problems in Egyptian society is to solve the real causes, which are illiteracy, poverty and lack of education.”

I asked skeptically about alcohol, peace with Israel, and the veil. Sondos, who wears a hijab, insisted that the Brotherhood wasn’t considering any changes in these areas and that its priority is simply jobs. “Egyptians are now concerned about economic conditions,” she said. “They want to reform their economic system and to have jobs. They want to eliminate corruption.” Noting that alcohol supports the tourism industry, she added: “I don’t think any upcoming government will focus on banning anything.”

I told her that I would feel more reassured if some of my liberal Egyptian friends were not so wary of the Brotherhood. Some warn that the Brotherhood may be soothing today but that it has a violent and intolerant streak – and is utterly inexperienced in managing a modern economy. Sondos looked exasperated. “We embrace moderate Islam,” she said. “We are not the ultra-conservatives that people in the West envision.” I heard similar reassurances from other Brotherhood figures I interviewed, and I’m not sure what to think. But opinions vary, and I’m struck by the optimism I heard in some secular quarters: from Dr. Nawal El Saadawi, an 80-year-old leftist who is a hero of Egyptian feminism, and from Ahmed Zewail, the Egyptian-American scientist who won a Nobel Prize and is passionate about education. Amr Moussa, a former foreign minister and Arab League secretary general who is a front-runner in the race for president, was similarly optimistic. He told me that whatever unfolds, Egypt will continue to seek good relations with the U.S. and will unquestionably stand by its peace treaty with Israel. “You cannot conduct an adventurous foreign policy when you rebuild a country,” he said. “We must have the best of relations with the United States.” When I raised U.S. concerns that Egypt under the Muslim Brotherhood and the more extremist Salafis might replicate Iran, he was dismissive: “The experience of Iran will not be repeated in Egypt.” I think he’s right. Revolutions are often messy, and it took Americans seven years from their victory in the American Revolution at Yorktown to get a ratified Constitution. Indonesia, after its 1998 revolution, felt very much like Egypt does today. It endured upheavals from a fundamentalist Islamic current, yet it pulled through. So a bit of nervousness is fine, but let’s not overdo the hand-wringing – or lose perspective. What’s historic in Egypt today is not so much the rise of any one party as the apparent slow emergence of democracy in the heart of the Arab world. □



The last Herman Cain column



GAIL COLLINS
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You understand, of course, that Herman Cain is never going to go away.

“Me, a womanizer? I would never have thought they’d come up with that one,” Cain wrote to his supporters this week in an essay promising to – yes! – keep talking. Where do you think he’ll pop up next? As the newest Fox commentator? On “Dancing With the Stars?” As Donald Trump’s guest judge on “Celebrity Apprentice?” As a contestant on “Celebrity Apprentice?”

We’ll know all too soon. The only part of his last chapter that remains sort of fascinating is Ginger White, the accuser who has been given credit in some corners for bringing the Cain campaign down. All things considered, that couldn’t have been much of a strain.

(“Rumors of Extramarital Affair End Campaign of Presidential Candidate Who Didn’t Know China Has Nuclear Weapons,” read a headline in The Onion.)

But about Ginger. White has been on an interview tour, telling a story that gets increasingly dismal as she goes along.

“It wasn’t a love affair. It was a sexual affair, as hard as that is for me to say and as hard as it is for people to hear it,” she told Law-

rence O’Donnell on MSNBC.

By the time she got to The Daily Beast, White was confiding that “one time we were having sex and I was looking up at the ceiling, thinking about, ‘What am I going to buy at the grocery store tomorrow?’”

Until now, I always thought the most depressing story of love with a married political celebrity was that of Kay Summersby, who was Dwight Eisenhower’s chauffeur during World War II.

She published a memoir that I have always believed – just as I believe Ginger White’s interviews – because nobody would want to make up something so bleak. Summersby said that she had, indeed, fallen for Ike, who made declarations of love in return but was unable to consummate the affair.

After the war, perhaps hoping to give it another try, he promised to bring her back to the United States.

Then he broke off the relationship in a letter dictated to his secretary, with a personal note written on the bottom that said:

“Take care of yourself and retain your optimism.”

Now if that isn’t enough to quench the embers of political passion I don’t know what is. Unless it’s White’s description of asking Cain for more financial support and having him demand that she sell the freeloading family dog first.

As she’s expanded on her story over and over again, White has made it clear that she’s spent much of her adult life trading sex for financial support, all the while denying that she is “a woman who sleeps with men for money.” The mystery is why in the world she went public given that she has kids to protect and a completely unflattering saga to tell.

White claimed that she knew it all would come out anyway, and “I wanted to give my side of the story.”

This makes no sense because 1) her side of the story is so awful, and 2) the media seldom go after sto-

ries of consensual sex unless one of the participants holds a news conference.

This is particularly true in the case of candidates who no one believes will ever get elected anyway, a category in which Herman Cain has always been Exhibit A. Until now, the champion terrible explanation for going public was Gennifer Flowers’ contention that she was disclosing her long-term affair with Bill Clinton because he was “denying our love.” These days, according to her website, Flowers is a motivational speaker whose “two favorite speech topics are: ‘

Surviving Sex, Power and Propaganda,’ and ‘The M Years â(euro) [Surviving Menopause Mania!’” As you can see, these things almost never end really well for the woman.

And they generally work out fine for the men. Cain is headed just where he always was meant to be headed, except now he will be able to charge much higher speaking fees.

And he’s been replaced as the Tea Party’s darling by Newt Gingrich. Never has the voting public’s lack of concern for a politician’s private behavior been more crystal clear.

Given these facts of life, it’s hard for an aggrieved former lover to even get basic revenge. One of the few ex-political mistresses I can think of who actually did get lasting retribution was Anna Bradley, the mistress of Utah Sen. Arthur Brown, who in 1906 discovered Brown was sleeping with an actress and shot him to death. Let me emphasize that this is definitely not a strategy I am recommending.

It turned out that Brown had an ex-wife who had also tried to shoot him for infidelity and an overall back story so unsympathetic that restaurants offered to cater Bradley’s meals at the House of Detention.

The Times, looking for something nice to say about Brown, noted that he was “known to be intensely loyal to his male friends.” □

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